JANUARY 1951

COMMENTARY

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The Study of Man—
How Children Become Prejudiced — MIRIAM REIMANN

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Max Beloff — Golo Mann — Oscar Handlin

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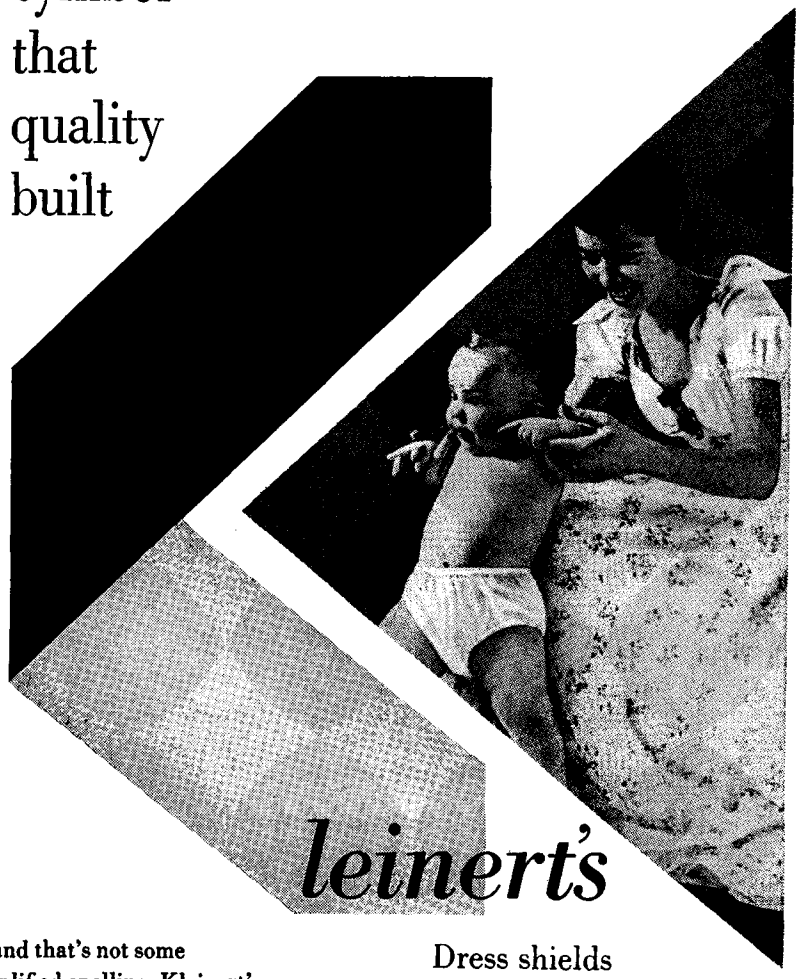

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

American Judaism: A Personal View *David Daiches*

Mr. Daiches, literary critic, chairman of the division of literature at Cornell University, and son of the late rabbi of the Jewish community of Edinburgh, will soon return to live in England after a distinguished career in this country. He here presents his personal impressions of Jewish life in America and his point of view on certain essential problems.

The Muddle of Asia *George Lichtheim*

On the right are those who wish to throw our support behind Chiang Kai-shek in an attempt to reconquer the Chinese mainland; on the left are those who feel that the Chinese Communists might yet be wooed away from Moscow; in the middle are most Americans, reluctant to get involved in full-scale war with China but determined to repel Communist aggression. George Lichtheim attempts to clarify the social and political revolution now taking place in Asia, and suggests the basis for an American policy that might effectively meet the Communist threat.

Washington Heights: The "Fourth Reich" *Ernest Stock*

The German Jews driven to these shores to find refuge from Hitler have had to face rebuffs and discrimination—even, alas, from some of their fellow Jews. But today, in their stronghold in upper Manhattan, where they form a community within a community, they are a well-established element of the New York scene.

Disraeli: Romantic Tory *Philip Rieff*

A fresh and perceptive analysis of the relation of Disraeli's Jewishness to his political philosophy, and of his significance for English social thought.

The Aftermath of the Blair House Attempt *Scott Fowler and Winifred Raushenbush*

When two Puerto Rican nationalists attempted to assassinate the President, many Americans concerned over civil and minority rights in this country held their breaths. Would there be "reprisals," would the conditions of Puerto Ricans worsen? The authors analyze the reactions of Americans and Puerto Ricans, and consider the broader implications of the affair.

What Israel Thinks *Ruth Ludwig*

That peculiarly American institution, the public opinion poll, is now happily domiciled in Israel, where the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research is engaged in regular polling on a variety of questions, from the political to the psychological. Dr. Ruth Ludwig reports on these polls, and on other research activities of the Israel Institute.

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COMMENTARY

THE NEW NAZIS OF GERMANY

The Totalitarians of the Eastern Zone

NORBERT MUHLEN

LET us imagine a German Rip Van Winkle escaping for a day the drumbeat monotone of Nazi boots, and stretching out for a nap along a brook in East Germany's Harz Mountains. He now awakes. Instead of 1936 it is 1951. When he goes down again to his native town, he learns from his old neighbors what great events have happened—how everything has changed.

Since 1936 Hitler's Third Reich has gone down in defeat and disgrace, his home town has been occupied by the Russian army and ruled by the Soviet Military Administration, and now after liberation and peace there is a "German Democratic Republic" presiding over a "new era of peace, progress, and plenty." This the glossy new history books tell him. Yet what do his eyes see? Underneath the thin disguise of new words and uniforms, is not, in reality, the scene amazingly the same?

Hailing a neighbor with a friendly "What's the news?" Herr Van Winkle was greeted with that strange movement invented in the Third Reich and dubbed "the German glance" (*der deutsche Blick*), as a counterpart to the Nazis' "German salute": it consisted of a quick look around to see if any informers were loitering in the vicinity. Walking along the village street, he saw everywhere the cold-faced, black-booted, black-uniformed young men of the SS; the only changes were the color of the necktie, which was now red, and the name of their organization, which was "People's Police." There were the same cocky boys in very abbreviated shorts and open sport shirts, the original tan showing through the blue dye in patches, now calling themselves the "Free German Youth." The Gestapo had ceased to exist, but he learned that its employees had now joined a new fraternity called the *Staatssicherheitsdienst* (State Security Police). He learned further that if any member of this fraternity denounced him as an "enemy of the people," he would be arrested and probably tortured until he admitted a crime; then a "People's Court" would sen-

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IN THEIR quite proper concern over every sign of continuing or resurgent Nazism, leaders of American public opinion have sounded the alarm at the return of individual Nazis to government office or positions in industry and at individual acts and expressions of bigotry in the zones of occupation of the American and other Western powers. But meanwhile, almost unnoted, across the border in Eastern Germany, totalitarianism has re-risen, fully organized and strongly armed physically and ideologically, ripe for new internal terror and possible external aggression. NORBERT MUHLEN, a close student of German politics, gathered the material for this alarming report in an extended tour of Germany this fall, and this article describes the situation as he found it. He has written for the *Reader's Digest* and other magazines, and has contributed several articles to previous issues of COMMENTARY, the most recent of which were: "German Youth in a Vacuum" in the May 1950 issue and "The Shooting on the Moehlstrasse" in the October 1949 issue.

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tence him to prison, if it did not send him to a concentration camp.

At the village inn he found himself seated for a *Gemeinschaftsempfang* (compulsory community radio listening) just as in the old days. And the same voices still seemed to broadcast the same speech in adoration of "the greatest friend of the people, the greatest thinker of all times, the creator of all new life"; denouncing and "unmasking" the enemy, the reactionaries, the Anglo-Saxon imperialists and exploiters, the international gang of money-mad warmongers; promising to all a better life as soon as these foreign criminals and their hidden helpers at home were liquidated by the people and extinguished from the earth. And long lists of names were read of those who, in identical words, pledged their enthusiastic support of this goal; the list ranged from university professors of medicine to housewives to high school students to undertakers.

True, the vocabulary of 1936 seemed slightly altered: bad things were more frequently bourgeois and much less frequently Jewish; good things were "progressive" now rather than German. But a poor, quiet, sleepy man like our Rip Van Winkle could not apply himself to the subtleties of official semantics. And why should he bother? He knew the old game and how to play it, even with a newly colored deck.

WHAT our Rip Van Winkle couldn't know was that the transition from the Nazi regime to the Communist one of East Germany had not been achieved by any mere change-over of labels and leaders. As a matter of fact, it took a hard struggle of almost five years, with great sacrifice of human life and continuous foreign pressure, to establish the new dictatorship over Germans who had just been liberated from dictatorship.

For, after the debacle of the *Fuehrerstaat*, the overwhelming majority of Germans were weary of dictatorial methods and suspicious of dictators' promises. Indeed, the German Communist leaders, most of whom had been living in Moscow, quickly realized they had to reckon with a new and democratic temper when they published, after Hitler's fall in 1945, their first "program of action." This program was strongly anti-dictatorial; it pledged the party to "absolutely unhampered development of free trade and free private initiative in an economy based on free private property; re-establishment of all democratic rights and civil liberties for all people; a truly democratic, free, and liberal education; absolute freedom of scientific research and of artistic creation. . . ." The platform was signed by Wilhelm Pieck, today president of the German Democratic Republic, and Walter Ulbricht, today deputy premier and powerful secretary-general of the Communist party, both of whom stressed that "*it would be erroneous to enforce the Soviet system upon Germany today . . .*" (italics mine), advocating instead a "parliamentarian republic with democratic rights and civil liberties for all the people."

What then was called by the Communist theoreticians "the party's German way" was in reality the party's carefully conceived German trap. In essence the trap consisted (as it had in Hitler's and Mussolini's first years of power as well as in various of the now completely Sovietized European countries) of a coalition government in which the non-Communist parties would be firmly gripped until devoured. The first elections in what was then the Soviet Occupation Zone were held in 1946. A short while before, the Communists—with the help of the occupation authorities—had forcibly merged the Socialist and the Communist parties into the Socialist Unity party (SED), which was completely Communist-controlled. Only Communist-endorsed candidates of the two "bourgeois" parties were permitted to run for any office; in addition, there appeared on the ticket the candidates of five "new" organizations representing the peasants, women, trade unions, youth, and intellectuals—every one of them a camouflaged "front" obedient to the Communists. Despite these elaborate precautions, the elections failed to give the Communists and their allies a majority.

One year later, in 1947, another election was held. This time many "bourgeois" anti-Communist candidates were arrested before the election, and votes cast for them were declared invalid. The press of the non-Communist parties was throttled; and the whole state machinery was brought to bear on the side of the SED. But the Communist party actually suffered new electoral losses. In East Berlin, it received less than 30 per cent of the total vote.

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Two years later, in May 1949, the Communists tried again. This time, the "People's Congress" was to be elected by a completely new and sure-fire method. The Communists prepared in advance a "unity ticket" on which hand-picked candidates of the various parties, as well as of the "independent" organizations, were presented side by side. The voters had simply to fill in "Yes" or "No," and since a good number of the seemingly non-Communist delegates were Communist puppets, victory seemed certain. But only 48 per cent of the voters gave their "Yes"; the majority of the voters either said "No," or purposely invalidated their ticket.

Last October, the balky trap was finally sprung. The single-ticket method was used again for elections to the first People's Parliament of the German Democratic Republic. The Soviet Military Administration which up to then had ruled the country had been formally withdrawn; but the Soviet army remained in full strength. Like the members of the new government itself, the candidates of all parties appearing on the "unity ticket" were appointed by the Communist leadership after being approved by the Russian authorities. To swell the vote, a new party—the National Democratic party—was founded by the Communists to appeal to the unreconstructed Nazis for their full cooperation in the "National Front."

For the first time in five energetic years the Communist scheme succeeded. Breaking the previous totalitarian election record of Hitler, who in 1936 had received 98.81 per cent of the German vote, the Communists announced that 99.71 per cent of the East German electorate had registered "Yes." Intriguingly enough, the Communist-controlled party of ex-Nazis was allotted 7.5 per cent of the vote, while the Communist-controlled Association of the Victims of Nazism received a mere 3.79 per cent.

NOTWITHSTANDING the comfortable notion widespread in the West that a vote under such conditions is "only a farce that can't deceive anybody," such rigged elections have a serious and important function in a dictatorship. They are the test—and a demonstration to the people—of how well a dictatorship is organized. The elections of last October showed that the dictatorship of East Germany finally had, after five years of effort, attained the ideal of Communist government.

The monopoly of power is firmly in the hands of party leaders who are themselves ruled by Walter Ulbricht, the party's secretary-general, who in turn is ruled by the Soviet leaders in the Kremlin. This monopoly of power is sustained by political organization, by indoctrination, by terror, by control over every bit of communication. Gerhart Eisler, propaganda chief of Communist Germany, last November called this system "a democracy of higher rank," using the exact words that Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels had employed in 1934 to describe the Nazi order.

In the totalitarian state, political status is like a large clothing label worn on the outside—it is obvious and distinctive. In East Germany, there are three main classes. On top stand the members of the state party, the SED, which at present numbers approximately one million members, and is subject to continuous tests and purges. One-third of the party members have been expelled in the last two years, among them many very high-ranking leaders and dignitaries. Prominent among those purged were people who had spent their years of exile from Nazi Germany in the West, or who had friends or relatives in the West with whom they had not completely broken off relations; in addition, there were those guilty of "cosmopolitanism," such as the Thuringian physician who "groveled" before the West by prescribing penicillin for a case of venereal disease, the Halle student of economics who admitted in an interview that he had read several pages by Adam Smith, and the language teacher in a Leipzig school who had used an old copy of the *National Geographic Magazine* in his English course.

Below the party members are the candidates for membership, people who have shown their loyalty but who are felt to need further "political education" and more thoroughgoing political observation before they can be admitted to the leading class.

Then comes the next, and by far the largest, class of the population, the members of "mass organizations." These are the people organized in the Communist-controlled, yet allegedly independent, groups such as the Partisans of Peace, the League of German-Soviet Friendship, the Cultural League for

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Germany's Democratic Reconstruction, the trade unions and the consumers' cooperatives, the youth and women's organizations, the Association of the Victims of Nazism, the SED's satellite parties (the ex-Nazis' National Democratic party and the German Peasants' party), and several minor groups. Not to belong to any of these organizations automatically makes a citizen of East Germany highly suspect. That every person is enlisted in one of these groups is a double advantage for the regime. The dictatorship can more easily control its subjects, for the members of mass organizations are continually watched, tested, and investigated. Moreover, many who join such organizations, even under duress, come to experience a sense of complicity, and often try to overcome their feeling of guilt by making excuses for the system.* Forced to ally themselves with the devil, they may either convince themselves that this devil isn't actually so bad, or they may cynically hope that his rule is going to last, so that they themselves will profit from rather than be punished for their alliance with him.

THERE is a fourth "invisible" class made up of those who may be non-political but who are "capitalists," and those who are either actively or passively hostile to the regime. All in this class are regarded by the dictatorship as its enemies. These enemies are prosecuted and convicted by the "People's Courts," where learned jurists are replaced or supplemented by the "People's Judges," who are Communist officials appointed by their party.

The dictatorship has nationalized all agricultural estates, all big industrial concerns, all insurance and banking companies, and all business connected with public opinion—from newspapers to corner news stands—and their former owners have been disposed of quite simply by having them convicted of "economic crimes." While smaller businesses and trade units have not yet been expropriated by law, many of their owners have nonetheless been convicted as "economic criminals": for instance, all the bakers in an East Berlin suburb who one morning sold their merchandise at prices cheaper than the fixed price, or gave away bread to poor old beggars who turned out to be disguised "economic inspectors," were sentenced to two years in prison as "economic criminals."

The politically conscious enemies range from people who let fall a critical remark about one of the leaders, or refused to listen to a Communist speech at the *Gemeinschaftsempfang*, to such real resistants as, for instance, eight youngsters under twenty in the small town of Guestrow, Mecklenburg, who were recently caught by the People's Police with handbills saying: "We want free elections in Germany." The People's Court in Schwerin convicted them of "endangering the peace, warmongering, and spreading fascist propaganda"; they were sentenced, according to the law, to prison terms ranging from ten to fifteen years. Every day in every newspaper of East Germany, one can read of one or more sentences like this handed out to political enemies. To read a Western paper and lend it to somebody else is the "crime of reviving Nazism"; it is punished with hard labor for five years to life.

The new dictatorship took over from the Nazis the concentration camps of Buchenwald near Weimar, Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg, and Neubrandenburg; in addition, it established nine new concentration camps. In 1950, according to the most conservative accounts, the number of people who had entered these camps surpassed the 200,000 mark; of these, 96,000 died in the camps, while 41,000 were deported to the Soviet Union. Early in 1950, the dictatorship announced with great propaganda fanfare that it had dissolved the camps. A grand total of 29,000 inmates were released; they were either very sick people, or Nazis needed to bolster the new ex-Nazis' National Democratic party; the remaining 34,000 were transferred to new forced labor camps, to the state prison of Waldheim, and to Siberia.

In contrast to the old Nazi concentration camps and also to the camps operated by the MVD inside Russia, the East German concentration camp inmates are almost never worked or tortured to death. Torture is normal only at the preliminary interviews with the secret police, when the arrested men have to admit their guilt and to inculpate others. The method of exterminating the regime's

*See Hannah Arendt's "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule" (COMMENTARY, October 1950), which demonstrates how this mechanism worked under the Nazis, as well as its after-effects.

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"enemies" in the East German concentration camps consists in what the Soviet language scientifically calls "dystrophy," the slow and sure wasting away of the prisoners through a systematically arranged deficiency of food and vitamins. In short, they are starved to death cheaply and without noise.

When I discussed these camps with sincerely convinced German Communists, their usual reaction was that the inmates were merely saboteurs and asocial elements, and that they were not treated badly. The death figures were either dismissed as enemy propaganda, or excused as natural consequences of prison life ("Do you know that it's much worse in American prisons?" I was asked), or regretted as one of those things that are unavoidable in, yet secondary to, a great social transformation. ("You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.")

Approximately 1,000 East German refugees arrive daily in the "decadent" West, fleeing the long knives of "progress."

With violence against the body there goes terror against the mind. To fence off the minds of East Germans from contamination by the West, the Communists have invented a new ideological crime, the so-called crime of "objectivism."

"If we have a bottle marked 'cyanide,'" said East Berlin's Municipal Education Director, Ernst Wildangel, "everybody believes us, and nobody wants to first taste and make sure it's really cyanide, or he would be dead. But, as concerns the products of Western thought, everyone wants to taste them first, and after a person has done so, it's too late: he is lost." The sordid crime of "objectivism," punishable by re-education in a labor camp and expulsion from the party, can be committed by reading a Western newspaper or listening to a Western broadcast; the culprit may even be a convinced Communist who only wants to hear what the enemy says so as to be better able to fight him—that does not matter. "True objectivity" can only be found in the works and words of Marxism-Leninism; its contradiction, "objectivism," is a Western capitalist trick to poison the mind.

At present, the theory of "objectivism" underlies all education, which is nothing but a political assault against the main enemy—the open mind—and a political instrument for producing "planned men [*Planmenschen*] after the Soviet pattern," to quote a recent speech of the East German foreign trade minister, Georg Handtke.

Every student has to go through "political education"; and all education is politicized. Professors who do not belong to the SED or one of the mass auxiliaries have been fired, except for a small number of specialists who are still used *pro tem.** Special Communist commissioners grill university students before every term; those who turn out to be "ideologically intolerable" are sent to the local labor exchange to be drafted for a labor project. Approximately one-third of the student body consists of the so-called "worker and peasant students" who are "delegated" by the party to the universities and forced to study there; in 1949, 3,260 Communist Youth were ordered to study; in 1950 their number was increased to 4,000.† They receive scholarships which are graduated upwards, like Stakhanovite wages, according to their political enthusiasm. In addition they, as well as other students, get a medal, "For Good Knowledge," if they come out well in the political examinations. They must always be uniformed in blue shirts. Some of them are political functionaries commissioned to spy on their fellow students and professors; they have to keep the "development files" (*Entwicklungskarteien*) in which the behavior of every student and professor is recorded in detail, as well as the questionnaires which students and professors have to fill in and which leave no question unasked.

"Whatever the field of study, our main subject is the fight for the Marxist-dialectical materialist school of thought against the claptrap of the decadent West, such as so-called idealistic philosophy," the State Secretary for Higher Education said in a speech. The new dean of Halle University's philosophy department, the "professor of dialectical

*Most of the famous professors who were fired from the Eastern universities succeeded in fleeing to the West; for instance, Berlin's Nicolai Hartmann (recently deceased), Eduard Spranger, and Erich Hochstetter; Leipzig's Theodor Litt, Hans Georg Gadamer, and Alfred Petzeld; Jena's Hans Leisegang and Max Bense—to name just a few from the field of philosophy.

†According to plan, in five years from now the whole student body is scheduled to consist only of such Communist-delegated "worker and peasant students."

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and historical materialism," Dr. Mende, delegated to the post by the SED, put it even more coarsely: "There are still idiots around who in this 20th century are interested in idealistic philosophy, and what makes it worse, some of them are still allowed to walk about freely." He implied what everyone knows: they will not be walking around much longer.

The enforced one-way education is not limited to *Geisteswissenschaften;* students of medicine—whose traditional doctorate has been abolished in favor of a state license—must undergo a political examination instead of the *Latinum,* the traditional first examination for future physicians. Fifteen hundred "progressive textbooks and primers" in 17 million volumes—most of them translations of Soviet Russian works—are to be printed and distributed in 1951, according to the Two Year Plan. Grade school children learn from them "the only correct concept" of life, as discovered by Soviet Professor Oparin: "Life has been created from matter in a purely materialistic way by the mixture of coacervate drops in the ocean with organic solutions."

In kindergartens where, according to official instructions, "the celebration of Christmas should be beautifully replaced by the celebration of Stalin's birthday," a Christmas play was prescribed with the following outline:

"First scene in America: White children torture Negro children.

"Second scene in England: Boy Scouts play war.

"Third scene: Children from Soviet Russia and Korea sing peace songs."

THE dictatorship, as always, focuses much of its effort on winning over the youth to its side, and it seems unhappily true that uniformed group life, with its marching and singing, of which there is as much in the Free German Youth as there was in the Hitler Youth, does indeed appeal to youngsters. With the same words used by Hitler youths to describe the good sides of the past —the *Kameradschaftsgeist* and the *Leistungsprinzip* of their old organization—enthusiastic Communist youths described to me these good sides of the present dictatorship.

The search for a meaning of existence larger than mere self-interest, and the wish to do something for the community, which many youngsters genuinely and often painfully feel, are fully exploited by the Communists. In the name of Heroic Hennecke, Communist Germany's counterpart to Soviet Russia's Stakhanov, youngsters are continually driven to achieve incredible working performances. They sort 20,000 cigarettes per day, as did seventeen-year-old, blonde and pretty Communist Marga whose picture appeared for weeks in the Eastern press—experienced workers before had never sorted more than 14,000 a day; or they install twenty radio tubes per hour, as did the young Communist Reinhold who became an East German idol for out-installing his elders. This kind of "heroism" can strongly appeal to some youngsters. "It gives us a sense of social usefulness which no worker had before," one of them explained to me, when he told me of his harvest feats.

Those who fail to remain in the system's good graces must register as jobless, which automatically makes them draftees either for the People's Police with its military discipline or, what is worse, for labor in the uranium mines of Aue, Wismuth, and Joachimsthal. (This labor service should not be confused with the forced labor used in the same plants; the labor draftees are free to move about and are paid wages but cannot leave their jobs.)

The dictatorship is also generous in handing out bribes and rewards to its youthful followers. And since those who refuse to cooperate forfeit their right to higher education or specialized training, their chances to make a living, and also their sense of personal belongingness, the regime may yet succeed in gaining the overt allegiance of a majority and the inner allegiance of a minority, for the time at least.

It may be safely assumed that there are more sincere supporters of the Soviet system in the age group under twenty-five than among any other group. While most Eastern Germans estimated the ratio of "true Communists" in the total population at "less than 5 per cent," with an occasional answer of "less than 10 per cent," the estimates of young people were higher. Among the members of the Free German Youth with whom I discussed the proportion of "real Communists" in their group, replies varied from 10 to 25 per cent. Among the

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students of the universities of Halle, Leipzig, Greifswald, Jena, and Rostock, the proportion of 20 per cent was given with amazing unanimity.

But if the Communists have won most of their adherents from the youth, it is also from the youth that there comes most of the decided opposition and resistance. Especially in the universities and some high schools, acts of resistance have continued on a large scale since they started in 1948 with the arrest, and the disappearance in a Russian camp, of Wolfgang Natonek, the young Jew who had survived a Nazi concentration camp to become president of the student council of the University of Leipzig, at which post he resisted the Communist claim to total control.

However, in the last two years, organized and open resistance has become more rare as the machine of state terror has perfected its operations.

Young East Germans who remain firm in their opposition to totalitarianism are today unsure what they can really achieve in the way of resistance besides telling their countrymen how bad the new order is, a fact which most already know. Open resistance today seems to them to be irresponsible, ineffective, and suicidal. What they mainly attempt to do is, first, to deflate the general fear of the police by individual acts of bravado and rebellion, such as painting "F" (for *Freiheit*) signs on house walls, distributing leaflets in public places, and so on; and, second, to hamper and frustrate dictatorial injustice in individual cases where they can help the victims.

The members of the new resistance have (in obvious contrast to many members of the old anti-Nazi underground) no moral reluctance at joining the Communist organizations to obstruct from within; neither do they have moral scruples against close cooperation with foreign powers, since they are aware of the international character of their fate and their fight. Finally, we may take it as absolutely certain that active resistance against, and passive rejection of, the Communist state among the young is much more widespread than in the Nazi dictatorship.

It is strikingly significant how often the new dictatorship feels compelled to attack just those people previously persecuted by the Nazi dictatorship. East Germany's prisons and labor camps are again being filled with the old foes of the Nazis—Social Democrats, pacifists, militant Christians. Even the members of Jehovah's Witnesses (in Germany called *Ernste Bibelforscher*, "Serious Bible Researchers") are being hunted down again. Since the summer of 1950, the government has rounded up all the members of the sect, those who survived Hitler and those who joined up after Hitler; and, as was soon discovered, the Communist denunciations simply repeated those of the Nazis.

THE situation of the Jews in Soviet Germany is obviously different from what it was under Hitler. For one thing, there are very few Jews living in East Germany. Only East Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden still have small Jewish communities, and their religious life has not yet been interfered with; several desecrations of Jewish cemeteries which were committed last year cannot in fairness be traced to the Communists. But occasionally Nazi anti-Semitic accents do creep into the denunciations of the West's "displaced persons," many of whom are refugees from Communist-controlled countries; the most blatant anti-Semitic attack of that kind was delivered by Anna Seghers, a Communist novelist, party hack, and writer, of West-German Jewish origin. Anti-Semitism also may rear its head in the attacks against the "cosmopolites" in cultural and political life. The *Taegliche Rundschau*, daily newspaper of the Soviet Occupation forces, commissioned Arnold Zweig, well-known, now near-blind, novelist (author of *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*), who returned from his exile in Tel Aviv to East Berlin after the war, to write the keynote attack against the "cosmopolitan" German writers. The order was quickly and suddenly canceled after Mr. Zweig delivered his piece and the editor was told by a secretary that its author "was a Jew himself." The desired article was written instead by Bodo Uhse, at present the Communist commissar of German writing—and "of purely Aryan descent," as the editor made certain before printing his article. The last Jewish editor of a Communist paper, Rudolf Feistmann, died last summer under very mysterious circumstances.

East Germans generally consider it a symptom of anti-Jewish discrimination that all

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Communists of Jewish descent were suddenly and without explanation dropped from the list of candidates in the elections of 1950 and from the newly appointed party councils where they had, up to then, held high positions; among them were Gerhart Eisler, Minister of Information and Propaganda; Hilde Benjamin, State Secretary of Justice and leading prosecutor of the "show" trials; Juergen Kuczinsky, labor economist; Walter Victor, State Secretary of Information in Saxony. Since, however, they only suffered the same fate as those non-Jewish Communists who had spent their years of emigration in the West and were suspected of being tainted with Western influence, it is not clear how valid the popular impression of anti-Semitism may be. But it is a fact that—in contrast to the years 1945 to 1948—no person of Jewish descent any longer holds an influential position in the East German Communist hierarchy.

CULTURE, of course, is being corseted along "progressive" lines; the finished contours nevertheless have a strangely familiar appearance.

"It doesn't matter at all," asserted a speaker at the East German Writers' Congress in Berlin last July, "whether one of our young writers happens to make mistakes of grammar and to confuse the *mir* and the *mich*, the dative and the accusative, so long as his work shows a progressive ideology." "The literary artist," another speaker said to great applause, "is a dangerous man who usually loves the words and hates the people, as shown from Goethe to Sartre." The Writers' Congress adopted unanimously a resolution recommending as the greatest writer of all ages Mr. Stalin, "the author of genius, the creator of the language spoken today by eight hundred million people." Of those who applauded the resolution, some had been prisoners in Himmler's concentration camps, some had been high officials in Goebbels' propaganda ministry ten years ago.

In their attempt to produce the *Planmensch*, Communist and Nazi totalitarian cultures come more and more to resemble each other. The Nazis' aversion to advanced art, which psychoanalyzing commentators blamed on the Fuehrer's personal past as a painter of conventional picture postcards, is again common with the Communists, who have outlawed all art not exhibiting "socialist realism," including the art of Pablo Picasso. And the Communists in East Germany show the same mania for new, monumental, giant-spaced party buildings as did the Nazis: Berlin's Schlossplatz, the Lustgarten, and the Royal Prussian castles were recently dynamited to provide a huge meeting place on the Moscow pattern, but also recalling Hitler's Nuremberg *Parteitagsgelaende*.

Even the jokes current in East Germany are the same as jokes told a decade ago, with the Communists now simply replacing the Nazis. All the clowns, masters of ceremonies, and entertainers of the few drab remaining night clubs were called, in October, to a week of "political education" since "their jokes were frequently not up to our times, some of them actually being directed against socialist reconstruction rather than Western decadence." The last humor magazine, the *Ulenspiegel*, was suppressed last summer; its satires on the West had made the West more tempting than repulsive to the Eastern readers.

After the Nazis had fallen, German youth pounced enthusiastically upon jazz music and American dances, which the Nazis had forbidden as "mongrel race" culture. Now the Communists have again forbidden "hot music" and American dances as Western-capitalist poison; the young Easterners come secretly to the West to dance the samba and rhumba. The Communists have tabooed Hollywood films, as did the Nazis, and they are reissuing the same magazine of anti-American propaganda which the Nazis published in wartime, with the same contents and the same slogans. They are even publishing an anti-Western newsweekly which is called—name of names!—*Der Neue Stuermer*.

THERE are, however, differences between Nazi and Communist rule in Germany as fundamental and conspicuous as their many affinities. The first, rather obvious and probably least significant, difference consists in the fact that the nationalistic appeal of the Third Reich has given way to a new, supernational appeal. Rather than the superiority of all things German, the new dictatorship proclaims the absolute superiority of the movement of progressive, "Marxist-Leninist internationalism," in which "the great Russian people" is leading, and Germany is only

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a modest, latecoming pupil. The pupil, of course, has to pay a fee, which in the summer of 1950 took the form of an agreement between the leaders of Communist Germany and of Communist Poland, in which the Germans renounced forever the German territory east of the Oder-Neisse line which the Poles had annexed after the war. To most Germans, even to most German Communists, this looked suspiciously like nationalist spoliation rather than "internationalism."

A second and, I believe, more decisive difference is that Communism is Germany's second experience with a dictatorship, a repeat performance of totalitarian rule, and that the Communist dictatorship in Germany was from its very beginnings based on force alone, while Nazism was borne by the consent of at least a substantial minority, perhaps a majority of the people. The loss of the war disillusioned the Germans with totalitarianism; the ruthlessness of the new Communist government has largely prevented any new illusions being born.

As a matter of fact, it can be observed that the most convinced anti-Nazis are also most active in the anti-Communist resistance, while the ex-Nazis themselves have joined forces with the Communists and actively cooperate in their system, and the fellow-travelers of the Nazis have turned into fellow-travelers of the Communists. The tragedy of the Nazi dictatorship even effected a catharsis among many Germans: "We do not want to be guilty again of crimes committed in our name while we silently stand by," a number of resistants told me in describing their motives for active anti-Communist resistance.

The large majority of East Germans form that only too frequent modern community where a general inner dissent from, and rejection of, the government is veiled by outward consent and loyalty gained through blackmail and terror. Much as people hate and reject the dictatorship, they fear it in the first place. While they cannot liberate themselves, they do want liberty. They can be counted on to fight with the West against Soviet totalitarianism to a far greater extent than they assisted the struggle against the Nazis—if. . . .

The "if" is, of course, a big one; *if* we know how to encourage this latent opposition, cooperate with it, and, above all, find means of aiding the nuclei of active resistance which do exist. Although this country has a special stake in this new resistance behind the Iron Curtain, it is not alerted to, and hardly aware of, its existence, its desperate struggle, its aspirations which coincide very much with our aspirations. Instead, public opinion in the West—and especially American liberal opinion!—has allowed itself to be corrupted by Soviet propaganda.

"AMERICAN" is, in East Germany, an official smear-word. The children in kindergarten, the highbrows who read *Die USA in Wort und Bild*, a cultural magazine devoted exclusively to defamation of this country, the movie, radio, and theater audiences, the semi-illiterate peasants—all have it constantly dinned in their ears that their despicable enemy is America, which, if they are to survive, they must defeat. The effect that this incessant pattern of propaganda has on the East Germans is far from living up to Soviet expectations. But its impact on the people of the West probably exceeds the Communists' most fervent hopes.

The "hate America" campaign, and especially the blaming of the loss of German unity on "American disrupters and their West German lackeys," has become a significant factor in West German politics. It acts as a form of ideological blackmail, spurring the West German politicians to strike nationalist poses and to assert belligerently their independence from the West. That the East Germans who talk most vociferously about national unity and independence are themselves spineless lackeys of the Russian dictatorship, everyone knows. But so effective has the technique of the Big Lie become in our day, that even those who know it for a lie feel constrained to act as if it could only be refuted by first accepting it as the truth.

The most lucid example of how Soviet propaganda does its job is in the problems encountered in the rearming of West Germany. It should be obvious to a child that the military potential of Western Europe—including the proposed German divisions—could not even begin to constitute a military threat to Russia. But by a stubborn and flagrant slandering of America's intentions in Europe, Soviet propaganda has convinced many that it represents exactly such an aggressive threat. And since West Germany is a

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free country, whose constitution guarantees the right of the individual to refuse to bear arms, Western plans for the defense of Europe can be hindered if not balked. Meanwhile, in terrorized East Germany, the *Bereitschaften* of the "People's Police" are being quietly and efficiently built up as a miniature elite armed force.

EAST GERMANY is also the sounding board for Soviet charges of a wholesale "revival of Nazism" in West Germany—charges which are piously repeated by American liberals, perhaps for little reason other than that they are by now so familiar that it is hard to believe they can be largely false. There are, of course, ex-Nazis in industrial and governmental posts in the West, but they are distinctly outnumbered by their counterparts in the East. The most fervid nationalists in West Germany—the ex-officers of the Bruderschaft and the Lutherans around Hessian Church President Martin Niemoeller—have a marked pro-Soviet orientation. And it is in East Germany that the Nazi generals are installed once again, bearing their old titles and authority. By shrieking about the fictitious revival of totalitarianism in the West, the Soviets have succeeded in diverting attention from the very real totalitarianism that actually exists in the East. Indeed, they have succeeded to such an extent that when one picks up an American periodical with an article on "the German problem," one can be sure of reading detailed accounts of the desecration of a Jewish cemetery by a few hoodlums in the Western Zone, or of a pro-Nazi speech by some minor West German official, with seldom a word about the thriving and bloody totalitarianism in the Eastern Zone.

Fortunately, in East Germany itself, the average citizen is somewhat less credulous than is the "expert" Alvarez del Vayo in the pages of the *Nation*. The chief reason for this is in the character of Soviet rule itself—from the lootings, rapings, and mass murders by Russian soldiers to the legalized and continuous robbery of East Germany by Russia under the guise of dismantling and reparations. Indeed, East Germany presents an exceptionally promising but so far scarcely used opportunity for this country to penetrate the Iron Curtain and to carry its message effectively to the peoples under Soviet rule. Bordering directly on the West, the inhabitants of East Germany are able to compare Soviet propaganda with the facts as they know them at first hand. Then, too, in the very midst of Soviet Germany there lies West Berlin, a dagger pointing to the heart of the Communist body politic: when tens of thousands of East Germans recently voted against their regime in the only way possible —by sending the stubs of their ration cards to be counted in the Western Zone—they demonstrated their true sentiments quite unequivocally. Were the West less anxious about the mote in its own eye, and more explicit about the beam in the eye of its enemy; were the West less worried about "containment" and more willing to take the ideological offensive, seeking support among the victims of Communist terror—the response would, in this writer's opinion, exceed every optimistic calculation.

The defense of the West cannot merely mean more and more soldiers sitting on their weapons. It must also mean something more positive—in short, it must mean the promise of eventual liberation. Such promises, made in good faith, and with actions to back them up, can be the equivalent of some dozens of infantry divisions.

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THE "MILITANT" FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

Education and Democratic Discussion Is the Better Way

DAVID RIESMAN

IT WAS not so long ago that Jews sought to defend themselves against anti-Semitism by discreet and persuasive apologetics and by the quiet intercession of their "best people" with the authorities. Though these methods survive, the past two decades have tended to replace them by pressure-group tactics in which Jewish organizations take the offensive—by means of picketing or boycott, or the threat of these weapons—against books (*The Merchant of Venice*), movies (*Oliver Twist*), teachers (City College's Knickerbocker), performers (Gieseking, Furtwängler), and exhibits (the German Industries Fair) that are thought to promote or condone anti-Semitism. It must be at once conceded that much has been accomplished by these methods in the last years in the field of civil rights and fair employment practices. Yet the new "militancy" has brought with it new problems, at once ethical and practical.

The classic American pattern encourages personal self-reliance, hitting back as an individual against attack, but Jews have scarcely felt themselves more free to do this than the Negroes in the South have. This situation promotes smoldering resentment and repressed aggression, which often seek release through the channels of Jewish organizational life. So, for example, a Jew who in private life puts up with mildly anti-Semitic friends, or has changed his name, may support an organization whose public "militancy" assuages his own private discomfort. At the same time, the "leader" of such an organization, afraid of losing his following to still more militant leaders, may be far more outspoken in his public "militancy" vis-à-vis non-Jews than he is in private life.

Whatever the effect of pressure-group tactics in reducing anti-Semitism in the larger American community, they do seem to have gone a long way toward enforcing unanimity among Jews themselves. Though only a small minority of Jews would seem to be what Alfred Kazin has called "mindless militants," this group has steadily gained a disproportionate power, often enabling them to intimidate the community, so that many Jewish "leaders" are actually the captives of the most violent and intemperate of their "followers." When a part of this article was presented in an address to a meeting of the National Community Relations Advisory Council (April 30, 1949), a number of people told me they agreed with my views but were in no position to say so publicly. Apparently, they were afraid of being called "scared Jews."

Just as liberals in the days of the Popular Front could often be forced to take extremist positions in order to prove that they were not "petty bourgeois," not "enemies of the working class," so today the more comfortably situated Jews, who are very likely a numerical majority, can often be brought into line

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STIRRED by Hitler's extermination of the Jews, and the wartime rise of anti-Semitic demagogues in the United States, American Jewry developed sizeable programs to fight prejudice and hatemongering, and to safeguard democratic rights generally. In the differing postwar climate, with the ebb of aggressive anti-Semitism, community leadership has been engaged in a period of review and stocktaking of its approaches and methods, with a view to better adapting the work to now prevailing conditions. DAVID RIESMAN'S article, based to a considerable extent on an address given the National Community Relations Advisory Council, is a contribution to this continuing discussion; in its emphasis on education and long-range intergroup relations, it is not untypical of much present thinking and reshaping of programs in the defense field. Mr. Riesman is professor of social science in the College of the University of Chicago, and the author (in collaboration with Reuel Denney and Nathan Glazer) of *The Lonely Crowd*, a study of American character, recently published by the Yale University Press.

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to support ill-advised policies which are justified by picturing the Jews (in America as well as elsewhere) as an oppressed group—a picture that plays much the same role in these tactics as the Stalinist picture of the workers as members of a "proletariat." Thus, many American Jews who feel guilty about having been untouched by the Nazi holocaust, guilty about their "assimilation," guilty perhaps about not being Palestinian soldiers or pioneers—in addition to all the other guilt-feelings they have as middle-class Americans—are easy ideological victims of Jews with more aggression and (frequently) lesser social standing, whom, in an earlier day and for equally bad reasons, they would have snubbed. In fact, in order to "prove themselves," the most assimilated occasionally become the most militant. Every threat or presumed threat to Jews anywhere in the world can be converted into a lever for the "militant" minority of Jewish organizational life, much as Russian threats to American interests anywhere reinforce the power of our self-proclaimed militant anti-Communists to put a blanket of "unity" over American life as a whole.

IT SHOULD, however, be noted that there are factors not peculiar to the Jews that motivate similar cycles of "appeasement" and "militancy" among many other ethnic groups in America.* The first generation of immigrants enjoyed an improved lot. They had come to this country, or migrated within it, in order to find greater economic and social opportunity, and they had found it. The standard of comparison was always with the old country—an old country assumed to have remained unchanged.

The second and third generations apply a different standard of comparison. For they are sufficiently Americanized, which means sufficiently middle class, to judge their experience in terms of a creed of complete equality of opportunity. While the older generations were glad to get into a college, the more recent ones are terribly hurt if they do not get into a fraternity; while the older generations were happy to achieve economic security and civic equality, the younger generations find exclusion from the Racquet or Hunt Club a grievous burden. Sensitive to rebuffs to which their parents would have given scant heed, they turn in their disillusionment and resentment towards ethnic nationalism. National revivals—Irish, Polish, Czech, Italian—are thus mainly the prerogative of the native-born; in this sense, nationalism is paradoxically a sign of Americanization. Those American-born Jews who today seemingly reject America's promise in favor of Israel have been shaped by American schools, American economic institutions, and American culture in general: their very effort and style of protest against America proceeds mainly along American lines, even though colored by specifically Jewish factors, and testifies to their "assimilation."

In terms of most objective indexes of discrimination, it is undeniable that the position of Jews has substantially improved in the last generation. There are many more Jews in the universities, and on the whole there is considerably less prejudice. Though indeed it is still a long way towards complete equality, I would guess that there is today, both in the fields of law and academic life,† more discrimination against women than against Jews. Yet, the improving situation of Jews in America corresponds to a mounting sensitivity by Jews to all manifestations of prejudice.

FURTHER understanding of the psychological complex behind the need of many

*I owe much to Professors Oscar Handlin of Harvard and Everett Hughes of the University of Chicago for my understanding of this cycle.

†In the field I know best, that of academic life, the situation has changed very much, even in the last ten years. I recall that when in 1938 and 1939 I tried to find places for Jewish refugees in American law schools, as the executive secretary of a committee headed by John W. Davis, I found my efforts hampered not only by anti-Semitism but also by well-intentioned persons who felt that Jews had so little chance in academic or professional life that they had best go into business. Today the men our committee succeeded in helping find very few of the old obstacles: they teach in the top law schools and have jobs in the government and in Wall Street law offices.

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American Jews to assert themselves aggressively can be found if we look at some of the targets against which Jewish groups have recently directed their fire. Almost invariably, these targets have been weak ones. In some cases, those attacked (or "pressured") have been movie exhibitors or movie lords—"lords" who tremble so readily before an archbishop or a Hearst or a Congressional committee. Another target is the public school boards, so often submissive to whoever in the community can make a big noise. Jewish bigots cooperated with Catholic bigots years ago to deny Bertrand Russell a chair at City College in New York. In descending on Professor Knickerbocker at the same institution, Jewish organizations had of course a rather different case, since he was charged not only with anti-Semitic opinions but with actual discriminatory practices in running his department. But what about the assumption apparently made in this case that if he could be proved to have made anti-Semitic remarks he should be fired—as if private anti-Semitism in City College (of all places!) is the menace that it might be, say, in Congress, or in the utility industries.

Still another target for American Jews is supplied by all things German. Although Germany is, of course, potentially strong, she has been weak since the war in the important sense that American educators, trust-busters, and others have found it easier to influence (or at least make a fuss about) American policy in Germany than about comparable problems on the domestic political scene. Just as anti-Semites portray Jews as powerful, in order to justify attacking them under the code of fair play, so the anti-German Jews have utilized allegations of "the German danger" to justify notions as cruel and crazy as the Morgenthau Plan. To be sure, the American Jews have probably not been strong enough to affect appreciably the course of events in Germany, either for good or ill. But they have been strong enough to keep Gieseking out of the country—and to fixate in the Jewish community the picture of a solidly unregenerate German people, as openly and intensely anti-Semitic today as under the Nazis, thus inhibiting any serious discussion of German realities. This last is yet another example of the attempted *Gleichschaltung* of Jewish organizational life.

In the case of Germany, Jewish concern is often rationalized in terms of fighting alleged resurgences of anti-Semitism there. Actually, however, it would seem to be motivated by a natural desire to remind the world of the slaughter of fellow Jews. It is probably inevitable that those who have not suffered should feel a certain guilt about that very fact, especially if one feels that not all was done that might have been done to rescue the doomed—and if one also has to combat one's own desire to forget and gloss over what happened. But the sensitive person should need no reminders: he lives all too constantly with the memory of history's crimes and disasters. Conversely, the insensitive person may react negatively to reminders, especially if he feels that they are sometimes a form of moral blackmail. At the same meeting at which my own address was delivered, another speaker who had been concerned with Jewish affairs in Germany mentioned how, when he would lay his complaints before a certain American general, the latter would say, in a friendly tone, "Now, don't throw the six million at me again."

TRUE, the American Jews who attack weak and easy targets in this country, or who applaud such tactics at home and abroad, certainly do not interpret their action as bullying or blackmail; and they would be horrified to be classified with those groups who use force or threats of force to censor art, or to suppress free discussion. And let us grant that there may be some warrant, emotionally at least, in viewing a Furtwängler or Knickerbocker as a symbol both of the European massacre and of the worldwide threat of political anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, while any instance of anti-Semitism *may* testify to a fascist potential, there is a grave danger of distortion when a hotel's restriction, a chance remark, or a silly book come to be automatically identified with Nazi cruelties, and call forth a reflex action of violent indignation

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and an effort at aggressive suppression. A kind of fantasy is built up which, though it has much more justification behind it, curiously resembles that of the anti-Semite who sees in the acts of the individual Jew the systematic conspiratorial intentions of a whole race.

In coping with anti-Semitism, Jews have a problem similar to that with which all Americans are faced in coping with the Russians. As Americans we have to learn to live with relative comfort and self-control in a state of cold war that in all likelihood will go on for many years. If we get panicky, and unable to keep our heads in the face of even serious hostility, we can bring disaster on ourselves as well as on the world. Thus, for instance, if Americans were to concentrate on hating the Russians, we should already be reduced by them part-way to their own level. As Jews we have even less choice. We are going to be able at best only to contain anti-Semitism in America, to prevent its spread, to prevent violent incursions and active discrimination; we have no chance whatsoever of wiping out anti-Semitism by force, although maybe some Jews, underneath fantastic fears, nourish even more fantastic hopes. But since this is so, those Jews who are over-alert to anti-Semitism and go to all lengths to lash out at any and every sign of it are likely to waste too much of their time and resources. And they will tend to neglect the things that might be done to better the lot and widen the horizon of all Americans, including Jews.

Perhaps Jews, looking at the European experience, consciously or unconsciously feel that no dividing line separates an anti-Semitic remark from an extermination camp. This is to assume more or less that there are no social and psychological barriers between thought and action, and between moderate action and extreme action. And it also assumes that Americans are not bound by specific traditions and habits. We Americans, Gentile and Jew, like big talk, and much that passes for anti-Semitic expression is big talk, with no thought or dream behind it of real action. And, happily, it is a fact that Americans draw a line between anti-Semitic remarks and actual persecution, and it is by virtue of this distinction (and the political and social institutions built upon it) that Jews in America have little more occasion for anxiety as Jews than for anxiety as Americans.

So far I have assumed that the books and movies Jews are attacking are in fact anti-Semitic. But is this really so? Who will deny that there have been Jewish Fagins? And are these the worst men to be found in the gallery of literature and life? If these things are the worst that can be said in serious literature about Jews, they are surely no worse than what can be said about other people. Indeed, as I recall *Oliver Twist*—the book, I mean, since I haven't been permitted to see the film—Dickens never makes Fagin's Jewishness an excuse for general charges against the Jews. And Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice* puts into the mouth of Shylock one of the most eloquent pleas for the humanity of Jews that has ever been written.

But even if I were wrong about these particular works, it still would not change my view. There are violently anti-Semitic writers, such as Ezra Pound or Louis-Ferdinand Céline, who have the right to say what they please, just as Montherlant, Farnham, and Lundberg have the right to say what they please about women. When Jews try to suppress such writers, they act as if they had something to hide. My own feeling is that Jews have nothing to hide, either in literature or in life. At one time I thought it might be practicable to draw a line between group-libel of the Jews which included false statements of fact—such things as are now peddled by Curt Asher and William Dudley Pelley—and works of art in which Jews are dealt with perhaps unsympathetically, but as part of a whole picture of life.* But, in time, my studies convinced me that there were virtually insuperable administrative difficulties in drawing such a line, and in entrusting it to public officials and juries, and that the dangers outweighed the possible benefits. Suits

*See my article, "Democracy and Defamation," *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 42, 1942.

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for libel by individual Jews and replies in the forum of public discussion are, of course, another matter entirely, though hardly one of great importance. My general feeling is that our tradition of civil liberty is the best defense we have for individuals and for minorities; and Jews have every interest, as Jews and as Americans, in seeing that this tradition remains strong and vital.

In view of what happened in Europe and of the existence of anti-Semitism in America, it is not surprising that Jews feel weak and therefore lack confidence that full and free discussion will be just to them. Nevertheless, I feel that we should encourage such discussion. Jews are, after all, much more interesting to talk about than anti-Semitism. And I think it best that we should be prepared to take our chances in such a discussion, only making efforts to see that it is stimulating and abundant.

AT PRESENT we may distinguish four levels of talk about Jews in America, four levels that hardly mix or meet. At the top level are the intellectual and artistic circles, of Jews and non-Jews, where there is at the same time curiosity and matter-of-factness about things Jewish. The pages of COMMENTARY are an excellent illustration of this kind of discussion. There one finds reporting of Jewish life without a fearful concern for public relations; philosophic and sociological debate about what, if anything, it means to be a Jew; and, in the department "From the American Scene," occasional pictures of the fabulously rich, interesting, and varied life of Jews in America. On this level, one can also find literature that is not a tract against anti-Semitism but an exploration of Jewish consciousness and unconsciousness; there comes to mind Saul Bellow's fine novel, *The Victim.*

Our second level of discussion is in the liberal middle class, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the class responsible for putting car cards about brotherhood in the New York subways. A friend of mine claims to have heard a radio jingle over a New York station, "He's no Jew, he's like you." I suspect him of satire. But if it didn't actually happen it might well have, given the notion of "defense" prevailing in many advertising minds. It is here that a mythical world is constructed in which Negroes and whites, Jews and non-Jews—and, for that matter, men and women—are "really" alike; such differences as there still are, being expected to wither away like the Marxist state. On this level Jews fail to see that it is their very difference which may be both worthwhile and appealing. This insistence on denying differences, or on seeking to eradicate them, identifies "American" with "Americanization"—and insists that for people to be treated as equals they must have more than their humanity in common.

The chief quality I sense in discussion about Jews on this second level is piety, a kind of dreary piety, filled with platitudes about unity, amity, democracy, and so on. This piety, it seems to me, as it spreads throughout "official" culture, through our churches, schools, and many voluntary associations, has two consequences. On the one hand, in the obedient circles it tends to stultify observation and thought. On the other hand, it enables those rebellious souls who refuse to subscribe to it to appear as terribly dashing and bold and "militant." The violent anti-Semites and those Jews who throw eggs at Bevin both achieve an easy victory for their image of the Jew over the official picture. Just this appearance of toughness is, I think, one of the great attractions of the Chicago *Tribune* and even more of the New York *Daily News:* such organs appear to monopolize daring and impiety. The only way to combat this is by open and honest discussion about Jews, to make people aware that Jews are *real,* and to make an effort to talk about them as they really are.

The third level of discourse about Jews is on what we might call the Catskill-Broadway plane, in which there thrives a form of culture spread throughout America by the press, film, and radio. Perhaps we find its beginnings in *Abie's Irish Rose.* Danny Kaye, the Goldbergs, Eddie Cantor, Billy Rose—day by day and night after night they exploit aspects of Jewish life and Jewish character. Many

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non-Jewish comedians play the same circuit; perhaps they have Jewish gag-writers. I wish I knew what Billy Rose's readers in Dubuque and Dallas, Charleston and Seattle, have made of his accounts of life and love at Lindy's; and I wish I knew what America makes of Milton Berle. Does this add to that identification of Jews with big-city life which —as Arnold Rose has observed—is so powerful an element in modern anti-Semitism? Do the lower-middle-class non-Jewish audiences of this Catskill culture have personal contacts with Jews of their own and other social levels, or is their only "contact" through these images of stage and screen? What is the attitude of these audiences towards the Jewish comic or, for that matter, the Jewish Winchell—are these performers patronized as something exotic and foreign? Are they felt to be Jews at all? I expect we would find a good deal of ambivalence, a mixture of motives, both towards the performer and the aspect of Jewish culture that he symbolizes. The same listener, for instance, may both despise and be fascinated by Winchell. I would like to know a lot more about this whole area for the sake of the light it would shed on both the myths of the Americans and the myths of and about the Jews.

The fourth level of discussion about Jews I would locate primarily in the working class and in the class areas where workers and lower-middle class fade into each other. These people have little opportunity to express their own attitudes except through conversation—on the workbench, in the bar, on the street corner. The only medium of publication available is the walls of toilets. Even apart from the question of interstate commerce, group-libel laws—such as those being pushed by the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress—can hardly be effective here! These toilet walls, indeed, are the distorted reflection of—and rebellion against—middle-class piety in respect to the two things, race and sex, that so many Americans find both indecent and alluring. If this level is reached at all by the propaganda of the dreary pietists, the principal effect might perversely be only to make Jews seem even more mysterious than before—and official culture more mendacious and mealy-mouthed. Working-class anti-Semitism is very strong indeed, if I may judge from recent studies of prejudice conducted under the auspices of the Scientific Department of the American Jewish Committee. Whether much of it is anti-Semitism that yearns for action or just big talk and griping, I do not know. Here, too, I think there is a lot we can find out.

By and large there is very little exchange among these four levels of discussion about Jews. I would like to see the pattern of the first level—the pattern of matter-of-fact, interested, informed discussion—spread as widely as possible. I don't mean to imply that we shall get rid of comments on toilet walls if we encourage public discussion about Jews. But I do think that it would do a good deal to help Jews get a sound appraisal of the actual extent of anti-Semitism; and while Jews and their non-Jewish friends would hear many disagreeable things, some of them true, we would have fewer nightmares as to what was being said behind our backs.

So far, I have made clear my conviction of the futility of much that passes for militancy and—the other side of the coin—much that passes for sweet, pious reasonableness. I want now to draw a few needed distinctions.

First, I think Jewish attacks on anti-Semitism should aim at its containment, not its extirpation. In general, human efforts to eliminate vice totally, rather than to contain it within tolerable bounds, run the risk of a total "politicization" of society. That is, there are totalitarian implications in permitting political measures to encompass all of private, academic, and literary life.

Second, I think Jews go beyond the legitimate containment of anti-Semitism when they seek, as a pressure group, to limit freedom of teaching and expression. Naturally, a Jew need not himself support anti-Semitic expression; why should he? If a Jew resigns from a welcoming committee for Gieseking, he stands on his personal dignity. So does a Jew who declines to read or to place advertis-

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ing in an openly anti-Semitic newspaper. But just as soon as such Jews band together and try to prevent other people from reading a paper or hearing a pianist, then they are no longer exercising a personal privilege but interfering with the personal privileges of others. In the present context of American society, freedom of expression is one of the great safeguards for Jews and all other minorities subject to prejudice. As we know, this freedom needs to be protected not only against government, but even more against private censorship—whether by Legionnaires, businessmen, unions, the Legion of Decency, or the Commission on Law and Social Action. Above all, freedom needs active support and encouragement from its friends, as well as protection from its many powerful foes.

Third, I would suggest that Jews are on the whole wisely advised not to spend their lives as anti-anti-Semites. We suspect that the vice crusader probably enjoys pornography and perhaps the anti-anti-Semite is fascinated by what he fights.

In any case, paradoxical as it may seem, Jews could become more at ease if they accepted the fact (I believe it to be a fact) that their fate as Jews in America is largely beyond their control. As many realize, Jewish well-being depends on the health of society as a whole, and only anti-Semites will claim that Jews are powerful enough to save or sink America. And it is relatively futile for Jews to address themselves to hardened anti-Semites as an audience: why should the anti-Semite listen to the Jew, especially when the latter speaks, not as one human being to another, but through the mass media of communication? We are always better off in devoting ourselves to talking to people who, at least in part, want to hear us. I think we should take our motto from William Blake: "When I tell any Truth," he said, "it is not for the sake of convincing those who do not know it, but for the sake of defending those that do."

Since, therefore, Jews waste their time when they spend it all trying to impress or repress their enemies, their very lack of power becomes an invitation to devote their major energies to self-development. This, too, may involve combat, but of a different sort and with a different goal, for the focus would shift away from the question as to what menacing things are being said about Jews to more challenging questions: What kind of better, more creative Jewish community and American society would we like to see in the future? What are the arts that give us pleasure and enrich our lives, and how do we go about encouraging them? What will make America a more interesting and lively place to live in?

There are, I will agree, in the life of a society, times so desperate that repression of a totalitarian movement on its way to power may be required. That is not, in my opinion, the situation now—and if it were, as I have said, the Jews would not be the ones most able to do much about it. But Jews, like other Americans, can always find the situation they are in to be grim and desperate if they look hard enough, and can thus rationalize their failure to concern themselves with the possibilities of a more abundant life.

THE policy I propose, as should be evident, is motivated not by a fear that in a contest of strength and fanaticism the Jews are bound to suffer because they are fundamentally weak, but rather by a fear of the evil Jews inflict on themselves and on other Americans by interfering with freedom of expression. We seem to be building a society in which any reasonably well-organized minority group can get itself a limited veto over the mass communications industries and, with some exceptions, over public political debate. Let us return to the movies as a prime example. The focus on the problem of repression that the organized Jews share with other organized groups tends to give us movies in which disagreeable things cannot be shown about doctors, veterans, Jews, morticians, priests, labor leaders, Negroes, Marshall Plan countries, and so on; only lawyers, gangsters, nightclub operators, and Russians lack effective Hollywood lobbies. Curbed on these scores, and also on the score of open sex, the movies cater to sadism—even movies which are "good

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for race relations" do this. Perhaps if Jewish energies were spent, not in adding to the list of taboos, but in trying to free the mass media and the public mind from taboos, they would not get very far. But the advantage of choosing freedom as an ally is that, while it may sometimes be defeated, it is always a more interesting and agreeable side to be on.

A dangerous disregard and contempt for artistic work is evident in the easy condemnations of allegedly anti-Semitic movies, books, and performers by the militants. But a more subtle contempt also appears in those who view every act from the standpoint of real or imaginary "others" and therefore would like to use the arts to promote "better race relations." Indeed, we find that while the militants profess scorn for tactical considerations, they are in agreement with these public-relations-minded Jews in their view of culture as a mere expendable. Recently, for instance, a producer's representative, typical of the latter group, wanted me to go on record in favor of *Home of the Brave* on the ground that it was "good for race relations." When I asked him (the somewhat ironic question) whether he thought *Symphonie Pastorale* was good for race relations, he did not understand me—what did this movie about a pastor's family tragedy have to do with race relations? In his attitude, he patronized both his own craft of movie-making and the movie audience: he assumed that people get out of a movie a message as simple as the fortune-teller's printed slip in a penny arcade. The notion that the art form itself, over a period of time, could affect *the quality of American life*, and hence of its race relations, is forgotten in anxious concern for the presumed immediate results. This producer's representative did not ask himself what kinds of movies he himself enjoyed seeing, but looked at his product from the stance of an outsider—this is the hallmark of the public-relations approach. But it is evident that a person who seems only to patronize others also patronizes his own human reactions and, while he thinks he manipulates the emotions of the audience, also manipulates, and eventually causes to evaporate, his own emotions.

IN FACT, it is on a platform of contempt and distrust for people that the militants and the public-relations-minded groups, whatever their internecine quarrels, can unite. While the militants assume that most Jews not of their faction and all non-Jews except their certified "friends" are anti-Semitic, and sally forth to fight them, the public-relations-minded people assume that Americans are governed only by expediency and sally forth to cozen them. Instead of defending in their own membership and among its allies the best traditions of American freedom, they devote themselves to specious arguments with which to "manipulate" the indifferent mass.

An instance of the latter practice is the argument against racial discrimination frequently advanced by Jewish organizations—and not only by them, of course—that restrictive covenants and other discriminatory practices are economically expensive. Or, in another form, the argument says that racialism makes trouble for our foreign policy. People are hardly going to like Jews and Negroes better because hating them costs money or looks bad in Indonesia! The people who put out such arguments do not "believe" them; that is, the arguments are true enough, but it is not because of them that the arguers were themselves won over to the cause of racial justice and equality. To offer arguments that do not have weight for oneself is, I think, patronizing and arrogant. Wishing, each in his way, to be "realistic" and hard-boiled, the militants and the public-relations people both are apt to forget that people need ideals and that the human passion for freedom is one of the recurrent experiences of mankind.

INDEED, to defend freedom by appeals to public-relations considerations is, in a fundamental sense, to weaken it. One reason why the American tradition of freedom is perhaps less vital now than a hundred years ago is precisely that it has become enmeshed in piety and propaganda. This, of course, is not something the Jewish defense organizations have done; it is part of a long historical development in which freedom and democracy

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have become schoolbook words, have been linked with reactionary economic programs, and have been made available for the export trade. To see what has happened we need only compare the kind of writing about American democracy current in Jefferson's day with that of our own. From Jefferson to Mark Twain and Veblen there was a bite and vigor in American letters that is seldom dared today. Our various official doctrines of unity—the phrase, "the" American way of life, is revealing—and our various pressures of censorship are both symptoms and causes of the shift.

The picture of America which gets through the censorship is a stereotype, and not a very interesting one. During the last war, we experimented with an effort to create a stereotype both of America and of the "GI," and to sell this to the soldiers through advertising, radio, and the military indoctrination agencies. The soldiers resented it, but took their resentment out in swearwords and apathy, since they lacked the resources and encouragement to develop their own picture of themselves and what they were doing. Today, we seem to be marketing to the civilian population a picture as spurious, as lacking in complexity and savor, as the GI Joe myth. Jews in America, like the other minorities who make up the majority, will not thrive on such stereotypes, even though severally favorable to racial tolerance—if freedom is the price, tolerance comes too high. But, in fact, this is an unreal alternative, since minorities thrive, not on a colorless uniformity but on diversity, even conflict—including diversity and conflict among themselves.

MANY Americans have lost faith in freedom and have lost hope in the future. Many Americans have imitated the methods of their totalitarian enemies and have swung away from complacency and over-timidity in the direction of paranoia and over-aggression; still others have swung away from tolerance as a fighting faith to tolerance as a public-relations maneuver. Many Americans are attracted by force and repression, many by the veiled (and hence in many ways preferable) force of manipulative public relations. The "mindless militants" among the American Jews, and the public-relations soothsayers, have therefore plenty of company, though not good company. But what is particularly sad and ironic in this development is that those very Jews who often violently attack the policy of "assimilation" and who make much of their Jewish consciousness seem to have been completely uprooted in America from the mainstream of Jewish values. For in the past Jews learned to depend for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on very formidable weapons of another order: namely, good judgment, the free exercise of reason, and hospitality to intellect and hatred of force, traditions which go back almost three thousand years.

Since analogous developments have overtaken many Jews and many Americans, we may suppose that the explanation for the historical shift in Jewish attitude lies less in the miseries peculiar to Jews than in those that they share with their fellow Americans. Specifically, as I have already indicated, many Jews, like many other Americans, do not know how to be happy—do not even know how to become aware of whether they are happy or not. Despite, as things go, a fair degree of security, despite very considerable material abundance, we find it somehow easier to be miserable. In our private lives, we look for, or easily fall into, agendas—ways of getting through the day and the evening. In our public lives, we live under a sense of menace and doom, create a context of chronic emergency, and are drawn to crusades against enemies, real and imaginary, because our lives are not sufficiently rewarding in their own terms. We think we would be happy in a world free of anti-Semitism and such evils, but I doubt it.

Any programs of "action" that rob us of any part of our intellectual heritage, that inhibit our curiosity and wonder about the world and the people in it, or that substitute the miasma of "piety" for the élan of truth, cannot make for happiness. And a life filled up with activities, aggressions, and anxieties is not my conception of a full life.

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WILL TECHNOLOGY DESTROY CIVILIZATION?

Why the Prophets of Doom Are Wrong

FRANZ BORKENAU

A COMMON and increasing disillusionment with technology today marks contemporary thinkers of the most divergent tendencies. A classic expression of this feeling was Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World,* a utopian novel portraying a world whose every problem and every difficulty has been solved by technology, but which for this very reason has become emptied of all meaning. Arnold J. Toynbee, though not envisaging any utopian ultimate in technology, also seems to lean to the view that modern technology is at bottom worthless—for "mankind's serious business is religion"; all that we need in the way of secular culture was already produced by the Greeks —in our technological efforts we are only the bad imitators of a past civilization.

The same tendency of thought has had such important representatives in Latin countries as Ortega y Gasset and Paul Valéry. But it has met with its strongest response in Germany. I mention here in particular only the Jünger brothers. Ernst Jünger, in his book *The Worker,* unlike Huxley, does not "reject" technics on aesthetic grounds or any other; but his positive conception of a perfect "*Arbeitertum*" (workers' civilization) came very close to Huxley's utopia and yielded nothing to it in point of horror. Friedrich Georg Jünger for his part has launched an all-out campaign against technology—to what effect, we can see in Otto Veit's *Die Flucht vor der Freiheit* ("Flight from Freedom," Frankfort 1948), which by a startling simplification would hold technology responsible for all that endangers our culture today.

LET me say at once that I do not deny the dangers of technology, which are tremendous. But what strikes one constantly about these lamentations over the evils of technology is their minimization of its unique achievements in modern times, achievements by no means limited to the sphere of the "practical." On the contrary, spiritual values of the highest order are inseparable from technology. Nor can you draw a line between technology and science—if only because without modern instruments there would be no modern science, as without science there would be no technology.

No one will deny that our science, in the course of its development from Galileo to Einstein and from Boyle to Planck and Rutherford, has penetrated the "interior of nature" as never before. Even supposing that technology is in fact as destructive in its consequences as many now claim it to be —is that all there is to it? For my part, I believe that as surely as the human spirit exists to illumine the cosmos with its knowledge, so surely does the modern conquest of nature represent this spirit's sublimest, most heroic achievement. However great the emo-

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AFTER World War I, a favorite theme for essayists was "the decline of the West." After World War II, the theme became "the end of civilization," even "the end of the world." This progressive pessimism is allied to a corresponding progress in technology—from saturation bombing to atom bomb to hydrogen bomb. But is it really so bad; will technology wipe out Western culture and, in doing so, itself commit suicide? FRANZ BORKENAU suggests we have too hastily turned against our old faith in science, which, he believes, has in it a human potential that will yet help civilization survive and progress. Mr. Borkenau was in left-wing German politics during the 20's: he went to England in 1934, but after the war returned to Germany, where he is now professor of history at the University of Marburg. He is the author of an important study of the modern world outlook (in German) and of *World Communism* (1939). His article "Marx's Prophecy in the Light of History" appeared in the May 1949 COMMENTARY. The present article was translated from the German by Martin Greenberg.

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tional price we have paid for the "disenchantment of the world" that inevitably followed on this conquest of nature, however dreadful our psychic distress—still, what does this matter against the fulfillment of an eternal task of the human race?

In dismissing as an incidental matter the knowledge we have finally won of the basic structure of the material world, the critics of technology for the most part overlook the fact that these very insights have given us a glimpse into the basic structure of all existence, spiritual as well as material. Are these insights tragic in their refutation of cherished illusions?—well, all culture is tragic, all culture is paid for by the surrender of primitive consolations of the human soul. And may one not ask whether the real threat to culture does not perhaps come from those who have not the fortitude to face up to the consequences of this greatest of human triumphs, and must therefore take flight from reason?

But is the flight from reason and technology at all possible? We ought to put this question to ourselves, not in any aesthetic and utopian fashion, but in complete and deadly earnest. Let us say, conditionally, "yes," a flight is possible. The condition is: the reduction of the "white" population to a fraction of its present size; for the present European and American population levels, unlike the Asiatic, are dependent entirely upon technology. A sharp fall in our population is, of course, not out of the question. It is unfortunately more than merely conceivable that an atomic war should utterly destroy tens of millions of lives as well as our technological resources and abilities. In the absence of such an event, technology will certainly endure, so that we can only discuss the possibility of its disappearance by assuming an atomic catastrophe.

Bertrand Russell recently suggested that such a disappearance might be effected by a destructive outbreak of mass hatred against technology following an atomic holocaust. This vision of an outraged humanity turning upon science is an ever recurring one. Spengler, it might be remembered, held that technology was something specifically "Western": peoples of alien cultures mastered technology only in order to use it in their struggle against the West; with the downfall of the West, they would cast it aside as "a monkey would a walking stick." Toynbee, too, would seem to expect much the same thing.

But is not Spengler's dark estimate of the future of technology intimately connected with his gross underestimation of what was really taking place in science? It was around 1914 that Spengler, himself originally a mathematician, disputed the possibility of any further significant advance in scientific theory, conceding a future only to purely practical technology. Obviously he mistook the actual depth of the current of science—mistook it grossly. Recent scientific developments, flatly contradicting him, have completely revolutionized our conception of the world. Hence a discussion of the problem cannot start out from any notion of a decline or "end" of science, but must begin by answering the question: *Is it conceivable that, as a result of enormous material and spiritual catastrophes, all the knowledge and skills we have acquired in the last three hundred years should be lost?*

Pointing to earlier cases of cultural decline does not in itself mean very much. To draw a parallel between our own situation and the decline into barbarism and the "dark ages" that marked the end of antiquity is certainly misleading. As Spengler pointed out, there is always more than one parallelism to choose from. You have to have what Spengler calls a "physiognomic pulse" to understand which parallels are valid and which are not. The parallel with the decline of antiquity is not. Although it is true that there was a sharp falling-off of urban life at that time, no real deterioration took place in technology. One of the most important arguments against a too simple notion of progress is contained in the fact that from the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt (3rd millennium BCE) until the 11th century of our era, actually no real change occurred in technology—a state of affairs that speaks stronger than anything

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else for the Spenglerian thesis of the distinctively Western character of technology.

But there are two sides to this coin of "Western science." Not only modern machine technology, but also something so seemingly insignificant as the European method of harnessing draught-cattle, profoundly affects population growth, the rise of cities, etc.* Will other, "colored" civilizations cast this achievement aside as a monkey would a walking stick? If not, where is the point beyond which they will refuse to borrow from Western culture? Or, as in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon,* will some one year finally be fixed, and all technological innovations made prior to it accepted, and all those made afterwards rejected?

AT THIS point Alfred Weber, the contemporary German historian, has attempted to offer us a way out of our difficulty. For the most part he accepts, if not Spengler's, at any rate Toynbee's theory of culture cycles. But he limits the cyclical theory to that sphere which Spengler, in contrast to *civilization* (the technical arts), calls *culture*—the sphere of the spiritual. According to Weber, history shows that *civilization,* if spared from purely external disruptions, develops according to a law of linear progress. Progress in the technical arts of civilization, once made, is handed on and learned, and so can never be lost.

This is a plausible theory, but it is difficult to verify: it is hardly possible to compare the course of technological progress in various recorded civilizations for the reason that only the earliest river cultures of the Orient on the one hand, and our own civilization on the other, ever made any decisive technological advances. Moreover, the technological achievements of Ancient Egypt and Sumeria, unlike our own, did not spring directly from the soil of these two cultures, but were end products of a technological revolution begun several millennia before these cultures arose, a revolution that consisted chiefly in the passage from the hunting economy of the Old Stone Age to the agricultural, pastoral, and handicraft economy of the New.

And here we have stumbled on the key! This revolution leading from the Old Stone Age to the New, paving the way for all the high cultures of antiquity—this is the only event in the history of man's conquest of nature that can compare in significance with that technological revolution which began in Western Europe in the 11th century, died out about the 13th, and sprang to life again in the 16th. Any opinion on the fate of modern technology has to reckon chiefly with this great parallel case from our pre-history.

It is no good to say that we know the revolution of our own day well enough by observation from its very midst, without resorting to such doubtful parallels. We don't know it. We know indeed whence it came, but in all likelihood its curve is still only at its beginning and we haven't the faintest idea where it is headed, or how steadily or how fast. For the prehistoric Neolithic side of the parallel, we have a complete curve.

WHEN one compares the Neolithic (New Stone Age) and Western technological revolutions, the first thing one notices is an extraordinary similarity in the wealth of negative and positive consequences following from both. On the positive side, the Neolithic technological revolution created incomparably more favorable conditions for the life of the human species. Cultivation of the land made possible a tenfold increase in population, led to a lengthening of the average life span, and brought about a substantial increase in comfort (huts instead of caves). But against this must be set an unmistakably sharp decline in culture. It is of course very difficult, because of the absence of written documents, to compare the spiritual life of late Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) times with that of the early Neolithic period. Yet such art works as we possess supply definite hints. The scanty geometri-

*Not long ago an extraordinary French cavalry officer, Count Lefèbvre de Nouvettes, a man gifted with the keenest historical intuition, showed that at the beginning of modern Western culture, about the end of the 11th century, a new method of harnessing draught-oxen came into use that quadrupled their pulling power and led to a social revolution of the first order.

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cal ornamentation of Neolithic pottery cannot even remotely compare with the splendid cave paintings of the Magdalenians. In these two kinds of art one confronts the expressive forms of two entirely different kinds of "humanity": in the cave paintings an art of restless boldness and the deepest inner freedom, in the pottery a narrow, timid botching of materials and forms. The wide-ranging hunt freed the spirit, the sod fettered it. As in its cultural, so evidently in its social results too, the triumph of husbandry was extremely disadvantageous. The hunter was "free and equal," the husbandman became a slave and his master a despot.

THE first result of the Neolithic technological revolution, then, was the almost complete disappearance of the Paleolithic cultural inheritance. But only apparently and for a time. Much of it was preserved, especially among pastoral tribes, out of which developed the equestrian peoples. And these same bearers of a few musty and cramped traditions became the ruling classes of the high cultures that now arose, and which could have hardly come into existence without them. Thus on the new foundation of Neolithic economy the ancient, temporarily obscured spiritual traditions of Paleolithic times prevailed again. And this fusion of old cultural and new civilized values created the very high cultures of antiquity whose achievements in every respect far surpassed those of Paleolithic times.

As can be seen, the parallels with our own epoch are in many respects extremely close. On the other hand, it is vitally important that we should not view the gigantic crisis of our day crudely or narrowly, and it is narrow to regard it as simply one of many cyclical crises in human culture. The crisis of our age is much more than that: it is the second great phase in the development of civilization. Our crisis is not a duplication of an earlier crisis. It is, even when compared with that of the Neolithic Age, unique.

THE Neolithic technological revolution came to a standstill early in the course of the Ancient Egyptian and Sumerian cultures, and it seems clear that no cultural motive in the narrower sense was at work, but rather a new environmental problem. It was a revolution that grew out of the battle with hunger. Empirical investigation confirms this inference. Late Magdalenian man had brought the technique of hunting to such a pitch of perfection that his life acquired enough room for him to experience higher cultural needs. But with the end of the Ice Age, the earth's last great geological revolution, game decreased and the amount of arable land increased. The hunting economy collapsed, and man was forced with ever greater rigor to devote all his energies once again to the simple struggle for survival, and to the building up of a village economy. The Neolithic revolution was a revolution from "without," one compelled by nature; and the very rise of the civilizations born of that revolution made its continuation unnecessary, for the new large states possessed organizations that more than assured the physical existence of man.

With the Western technological revolution, the case is reversed. Western science is a profound expression of Western man's orientation toward life, death, and reality. It is not merely a response to an external physical stimulus. Western society in its early stages did not have to face any new and fundamental problems. There was the problem of over-population; but earlier societies, too, had been obliged to reduce their excess populations, and this they did by colonization and conquest. Western society is probably the first in whose early stages expansion did not play the decisive role. In place of colonization outward, there was followed a course of colonization directed within—the progressive clearing of woodland for the plough—facilitated after a few years by the first perceptible increase in the productivity of human labor through an increase in animal tractive power. This unique course, a revolution from "within," was the result of the unique nature of Western culture, and is closely bound up with the West's distinctive urge to freedom.

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The assertion of one's individuality in society is intimately related to the assertion of one's individuality against nature. And just because the Western technological revolution proceeded from "within," from a cultural spiritual drive to know the universe and master it, and was not prompted solely by necessity, for that very reason it became, not peripheral, but central to the whole history of the West, and now stands as its greatest achievement. Precisely because of the deeply spiritual character of this technological revolution, precisely because of the intimate connection between technology and freedom, because of the inseparability of Western (and *only* Western) technological, economic, and political development, all aiming at freeing the life and spirit of the individual, it is an offense against our most precious values to exalt other aspects of our culture, such as literature, art, and religion, at the expense of science, technology, and the advancement of knowledge generally.

GRANTING all this, is it still possible for something specifically Western in its development to continue to flourish outside the West should the example of the West cease to exist? The Neolithic revolution, we now can see, just because it came *only* from without, consisted of easily acquired skills and devices that could be and were handed on indefinitely. The Western technological revolution, on the other hand, is so completely defined from within, is so specifically —even in its underlying moral ideals—Western, that it is easy to doubt the possibility of its being transmitted. There is, for example, the enormous yet still hardly adequate violence—hardly adequate in so far as it does not achieve the ends for which it is intended —with which Russia is carrying out its policy of industrialization. Can something so patently artificial—that imitates the external and material sides of technology completely divorced from its deep cultural roots and impulse—endure, once its immediate stimulus —competition with the West—is removed?

I need scarcely remark the falsity of Spengler's belief in the complete destruction, with a culture's downfall, of every distinctive value of that culture, the falsity of his doctrine of cultures as windowless monads. There is an enormous body of evidence to contradict Spengler on this point, evidence he never once tried to refute, but simply ignored. Not only the extrinsic values of civilization, but the most intrinsic cultural values too, have been handed on from society to society and epoch to epoch, and the fact that modern technology is intrinsic to the Western spirit, and not—as Spengler, Aldous Huxley, F. G. Jünger, Otto Veit, and countless others declare—a purely external body of knowledge and skills, is no argument at all against its transmissibility. It is only that the transmission of specific spiritual attitudes from one culture to another takes place according to different and more complicated laws than govern the simple learning of a quantity of knowledge and a number of skills.

Anglo-American ethnology has collected a huge amount of material bearing on the transmission of cultural values, but, so far as I know, the only one to attempt to draw any general inferences from it as to the relation of high cultures to each other is Arnold J. Toynbee. His notion of "affiliated civilizations," however, seems too narrow to me; he does no more than point to the fact that cultures follow one another in time and are the heirs of their predecessors. With Toynbee every later culture would seem to be the heir of some single earlier one. But the historical reality is much more complicated than that. True, there are cases—the "second" Chinese culture, for example, beginning with the older Han Dynasty—where a new culture is built almost exclusively upon a single ancient model (one is tempted to say that these "second" cultures fell considerably behind the "first" in creative strength). But what is much more frequently the case is that a new culture is first an amalgam and then a fusion of the basic elements of several older cultures. The Old and the New Testament cultures are classic examples of this. One arose in the borderland between Egypt and Babylon, and the other on the boundaries of Hellenism and the Orient. The

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further analysis of such cases as these is bound to throw some light on our own problem as to the future of technology.

Here we must first note that what distinguishes the rise of a new culture is the conscious opposition it puts up to the introduction of certain foreign values. Early Judaism leaned to a limited extent on Babylonian cultural tradition, but toward Egypt it felt only the bitterest hostility. Early Christianity had some affinities with the religious traditions of Near Eastern syncretism, but it strictly enjoined any traffic with Greek paganism. Naturally, it was inevitable that the Jews should borrow certain elements of higher political organization, and the Christians various formal elements of culture, from the hated neighbors, but the borrowing was strictly limited to "external" things. With time, however, there came a mingling and assimilation.

In the very same way, one might say, Russia today cannot avoid adopting our technological methods, while at the same time she tries to isolate herself as much as possible, spiritually and politically, from the West. And it is this resistance to a foreign culture that makes her adoption of certain of the external values (external from the Russian but not from the Western point of view) of our civilization so artificial and forced. However, the upshot of this will in all likelihood be not at all as Spengler thought—Russia and Asia ultimately casting aside these temporary borrowings from Western technology "like a walking stick." It is far more likely that, as in every analogous earlier case, the external borrowing of a foreign civilization will be succeeded by a centuries-long process of inner assimilation.

But does this analogy hold up against the possibility that all of our higher culture will be swept away by a few hundred atomic bombs? Toynbee, with his particularly strong antipathy to modern technology, goes so far as to consider the possibility of our technological development leading to the complete destruction of all civilized peoples and the elevation of the Central African pygmies to the position of the chief bearers of human culture. Against such a view of things there is little one can say in the way of conclusive argument. But an examination of historical precedents will disclose another perspective.

When one surveys all of human history, it can be seen that the periods in which cultures decline are indispensable intervals of cultural renewal. In the "dark ages" the modern Western spirit was gestative. The historical process just referred to, whereby a new culture results from the assimilation of elements from different older cultures, takes place without exception amid the catastrophic collapse of all the older cultures figuring in the process—takes place, that is, amid the upsurge of barbarism.

Vigorous and independent cultures resist to the death the challenge of a different culture. In their late stages they do not undergo a process of change, but tend rather to harden and grow rigid. Only when this period of rigidity is followed by collapse, does the creative process of fusion begin. This mechanism of cultural renewal, the decisive connecting link in the chain of human history, can be unhesitatingly called history's most universal law, admitting of not one exception. *A chaos precedes every cultural cosmos.* Chaos is not downfall, not ruin. It is the necessary connecting link between the end of one creative process and the beginning of another.

We hear it said that, regardless of the outcome of the present struggle between East and West, the world is "entering an era of barbarism." What in actual fact is "barbarism"? It is not the same thing as cultural primitivism, a turning-back of the clock. It is rather a phenomenon that manifests itself within the temporal and spatial boundaries of high cultures. It is a condition in which many of the values of high culture are present, but without that social and moral coherence which is the pre-condition for a culture's rational functioning. But for this very reason "barbarism" is also a creative process: once the over-all coherence of a culture is shattered, the way lies open to a renewal of creativity. To be sure, however,

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this way may be through a collapse of political and economic life, and centuries of spiritual and material impoverishment and terrible suffering. Our own particular brand of civilization and culture may not survive unimpaired, but the fruits of civilization and culture, we may be sure, will in some form survive. There is no historical warrant for believing that the slate will be wiped clean.

Let us try for a more balanced perspective of this whole popular question of "the threatened disappearance of civilization." It is hardly to be doubted that we are now living at the beginning of a period of "barbarism." It cannot logically be proven that, like every earlier crisis of its kind, it will be a creative transition and not the end, although an inner consciousness should tell us that the highest stage reached in the development of the human spirit could hardly be the immediate prologue to its final downfall. The legend of the Tower of Babel has indeed a point for us, insofar as it is true that, build we ever so high, an end is reached to all our building. Yet the truth of the legend is temporally circumscribed: for the end was no end at all, but a new beginning—over and over again we build our Tower, and right now higher than ever. And here, if I may, I should like to take leave of history.

I HAVE already expressed my repugnance to an attitude that, in dealing with the problem of technology, would ignore the *truth* of modern science. Spengler vainly sought to demonstrate that Euclidean geometry was true only for antiquity. The fact is of course that it is true for all ages, only we have come to understand that it is a partial truth, that it is true when certain postulates are given. The same thing holds for modern technology and science. Once discovered, these truths are a universal possession of humanity, because they are not only human truths, but in accord with cosmic reality. Very possibly such truths can be lost sight of in chaotic transitional periods, but is it conceivable that they should vanish as if they had never existed? Or isn't it far more likely that, after having been purged in the fires of a great cultural change, they should first really begin to shine forth?

And now the cat is indeed out of the bag. I have gone and blabbed my faith in progress, that unpardonable sin. Yet I do not mean that automatically, steadily accelerating progress in which Condorcet, Hegel, and Buckle believed, not a progress that can dispense with cycles and relapses, not a progress on an ever rising historical escalator that one can commit oneself to with smugness and equanimity. Still, much has happened in the course of our evolution from primordial atom to amoeba, from amoeba to man, and from Peking Man to Planck and Rutherford; and it seems absurd to me to imagine that in all this there is little more that is worthy of philosophical and religious notice than is involved in lamenting the sins and sufferings of existence.

We all know that the chief concern of the opponents of this qualified belief in progress is with the "timeless," and it is to the "timeless" that I too am led. The kernel of the faith in progress, it turns out, is a faith in the effective significance of objective truth in human life. Is it an accident that all those who deny progress, from Spengler to Barth, are the very ones who deny the efficacy of all the truths that man perceives by his unaided intellect? And is not truth one of the chief aspects of the divine? And in this respect, on the same level with morality? To deny the truths perceived by man, is it not to deny the stamp of divinity upon creation? Is not faith in progress perhaps in the end only a faith in God's positive working in history—and not outside of history?

But in Germany especially, this faith in the positive significance of truths perceived by man's unaided intellect is zealously combated. Is not this zeal perhaps only a disguised version of the old Lutheran belief in the devil's domain over the world? And this belief in the devil as "Prince of this world," reaching as it does by hidden ways from the Albigensians to Luther and ultimately uniting Lutheranism with Gnostic demonology—isn't this belief ultimately the root of all German evil? *Sapienti sat.*

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HAS THE AMERICAN VOTER SWUNG RIGHT?

The Mid-Term Election in Perspective

ROBERT BENDINER

TO THE average citizen of the Republic, the elections of 1950 are already embalmed in history and hardly more a matter for general discussion than the rout of the Whigs a century ago. To the politicians, both victor and vanquished, they have no doubt afforded useful data on the advisability of this or that campaign strategy. But to the analyst they are just beginning to yield facts and figures that reveal, at least to some degree, the state of the public mind, with corresponding implications for the future.

I say "to some degree" because an American mid-term election offers somewhat less ground for satisfying generalization than an average nationwide weather map. Both describe regional conditions, modified by local phenomena, but the meteorological chart is a more dynamic affair, capable of showing immediate trends with a fair degree of accuracy. The mid-term, on the other hand, roughly depicts the political weather at a given moment; except for slow, historical movements, based on changing social conditions, the trends it indicates are too easily reversed before the next election rolls around to provide firm ground for prophecy. A military misadventure, the rise or fall of grain prices, a political scandal, can turn the tide.

In the welter of conflicting signs, moreover, analysts will differ, not only on the basis of their desires, conscious or unconscious, but even out of perfectly honest disagreement over how to weigh special circumstances, how to reconcile contradictory results in neighboring states, or what allowance to make for variations in the personal appeal of candidates, not to mention the effect of purely local or regional issues.

WHAT a considered reading of the results *can* do—and I believe this justifies the effort—is to refute the unfounded and sweeping generalizations advanced by the victors, sometimes with genuine conviction but often out of palpable self-interest. They know, for example, that a voter who has long opposed the Taft-Hartley Act may not relish it any more today than he did, but if he accepts the proposition that Senator Taft's sweeping triumph in Ohio was a "mandate" for retaining the law, he will in all probability resign himself to it. What is more important, if he is himself a member of Congress he is less likely than ever to take an active role in trying to have the measure repealed. It is obviously of the first importance, therefore, to weigh the "mandate" claims against the facts, to have a second look at the results of November's contest with a view to determining whether the voice of Senator Wherry has really become the Voice of America.

Republican leaders have been far from unanimous in their own interpretations of the election, but in general they read in the results the following: the turning of the tide in favor of the Republicans; a marked trend toward conservatism; a clear preference for Senator McCarthy in his deadly feud with Secretary of State Acheson; and a sharp rebuke to organized labor. All of these interpretations are to be found in the public

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POLITICAL commentators from coast to coast have seen the results of our recent elections as a smashing repudiation of the Fair Deal and a "mandate" for conservatism in government. ROBERT BENDINER, himself an old hand at the game of interpreting political trends, disagrees, and tries here to present the basis of his disagreement. Mr. Bendiner, until recently associate editor of the *Nation*, is the author of *The Riddle of the State Department* (1942) and scores of articles in numerous periodicals. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "What Kind of Liberal Are You?" in the September 1949 issue.

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remarks of GOP leaders in the days that followed the election and in the comments of political columnists. It is more than time that they were checked against the returns.

THE REPUBLICAN TIDE: So long has the Democratic party been in power that the opposition naturally leaps at every sign that the country has at last decided in favor of a change. Historically, the two major parties have in fact gone in and out in a kind of tidal movement, with a span of eight to sixteen years between shifts. Superimposed on this pattern is the lesser but even more regular movement which shows gains in mid-term elections for the party out of power. Dating the Democrats' upsurge from 1930, when their party took control of the House, the turning of the tide would seem to be anywhere from four to twelve years overdue. But a study of the mid-term elections since 1930 indicates otherwise.

Remembering that the "outs" are expected to make gains in the off-year elections, with the *extent* of the gains indicating their rising or waning strength, consider the fate of the GOP in mid-term contests since the inauguration of Roosevelt. In 1934, still demoralized by the impact of the New Deal, the Republicans actually lost seats in both houses of Congress—11 in the Senate, 14 in the House of Representatives. But by 1938, the worst was over and the upturn had set in. In that year the Republicans picked up 6 seats in the Senate, 81 in the House. In 1942 they gained 10 in the Senate and 47 in the House. In 1946 they reached a peak, acquiring an additional 13 Senatorial seats and 56 in the House to capture full control of Congress. Not quite strong enough to win the presidential race two years later, they nevertheless expected to top their earlier off-year gains this past November. But, instead, they gained *only 5 seats in the Senate and 28 in the House*—actually the meagerest achievement for an "out" party since they lost in the abnormal mid-term election of 1934.

It is Louis Bean's explanation that the Republicans *had* their tide—from 1938 to 1946—and that it was simply not strong enough to carry them to power in 1940 or 1944 against the impact of the war and the personality of Franklin D. Roosevelt. If anything, their strength is ebbing, insufficient even to elect a Senator in the normally Republican state of Connecticut, where two seats were at stake, and barely enough to carry the even more traditionally Republican state of Pennsylvania. In the circumstances it would seem that unless disaster overtakes the Administration (Korea may be just that), the GOP is a questionable bet for 1952. So much for tides, admittedly a mechanical and theoretical approach at best.

TREND TO CONSERVATISM: Quite apart from partisan gains and losses, the argument is widely advanced that the whole New Deal-Fair Deal concept has been repudiated by the voters. Even in the Democratic primaries, it is pointed out, liberals like Pepper, Graham, and Taylor were defeated, while the election itself decimated the pro-Administration forces in the Senate, symbolically eliminating Scott Lucas, the majority leader, and Francis J. Myers, the party whip. Other top liberal casualties included Senator Elbert Thomas, who held the crucial chairmanship of the Committee on Education and Labor; Helen Douglas and John Carroll, both of whom gave up valuable posts in the House to wage unsuccessful campaigns for the Senate; and such other liberal stand-bys in the lower chamber as Representatives Woodhouse of Connecticut, Biemiller of Wisconsin, Young, Huber, and Burke of Ohio, and Jacobs of Indiana. In most instances, moreover, these leaders of the liberal bloc were beaten by emphatically conservative opponents—Carroll by Eugene D. Millikin, the brain of the Republican board of strategy in the Senate; Thomas by a former president of the National Association of Manufacturers; and Douglas by Richard Nixon, who made a name for himself on the House Committee on Un-American Activities. It is true, too, that Albert Loveland, who bowed to Republican Senator Hickenlooper in Iowa, was associated in the public mind with the Administration's Brannan farm plan. Above all,

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of course, those who make this reading of the election point to the fact that Ohio, which had formerly elected Taft by the narrowest of margins, this year gave "Mr. Republican" the triumph of his career.

Nevertheless, it can be shown without strain that in many of the instances just cited there were special circumstances working in favor of the conservative winner. Lucas, a liberal only by comparison with his McCormick Republican opponent, Everett M. Dirksen, was hardly the man to command the enthusiasm of pro-labor and independent voters in the first place. They took him on sufferance. In addition, he had to contend with a Democratic scandal in Chicago, which he had to carry by a big margin in order to offset the normally Republic downstate vote. It is also true that Dirksen spent nearly two years in barnstorming through the state, while Lucas was unable to tear himself away from the Senate until two months before the election. What was noteworthy in Pennsylvania was not Myers' defeat, which was taken for granted, but the remarkable closeness of the vote. In California Helen Douglas suffered not only from Nixon's exploitation of the Hiss case but from the overwhelming victory of Republican Governor Warren, an exceedingly popular executive and by no means a right-winger, and also from the sharp division in her own party. The conservative Pauley wing of the Democrats had no desire to see Helen Douglas and James Roosevelt take over the party machinery in the state, and it gave her hardly any more support than the California press, which did everything possible to keep her campaign a secret from the public.

Against these failures, whatever the reasons, must in fairness be set the liberal victories. Next to Taft the chief target of the liberal-labor voter was Missouri's Senator Forrest C. Donnell, a man whose political conservatism is matched only by his personal probity. In one of the few relatively clean contests, confined to issues and philosophical differences, Donnell's opponent, Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., went out of his way to condemn the McCarran Act and praise the President for his veto. And Hennings won. In Oklahoma, Representative A. S. Mike Monroney took the measure of a demagogic preacher whose stock argument was that Communism, socialism, and the Fair Deal were one and the same thing and equally damnable in the eyes of the Lord. What is surprising is not that Monroney won in a state that is usually Democratic, but that, seeing fit to campaign on a Fair Deal platform, he won by a big margin. Similarly, Senators McMahon and Benton ran as liberals, made no apologies for the Administration, and won against staunch conservatives in Connecticut, which rarely offers encouragement to Democrats in mid-term elections. Governor Chester Bowles narrowly lost re-election in the same state, partly because Jasper McLevy, the dubious Socialist, cut into his vote, and partly because the Republicans concentrated a fierce fire on him, realizing that if a Democrat won this first four-year term in Connecticut history, he could change the state's basic political complexion for decades to come.

Perhaps the most revealing statistics of the election, so far as trends and tides are concerned, are to be found in the Congressional returns for some of the politically more mercurial states of the country. Massachusetts, West Virginia, and New Jersey, which regularly drop Democrats in off-years, came through November with their Democratic delegations intact. Connecticut, which elected no Democratic Congressmen in the off-year of 1946, elected 2 in 1950. Ohio, which elected only 4 Democrats in 1946, this year elected 7. Pennsylvania elected 5 in 1946 and 13 in 1950. From all of which it would appear that the Republican wave, if any, is of distinctly minor proportions.

I HAVE purposely tried to treat separately the question of gains for the Republican party as such and the alleged trend toward conservatism. They are obviously not identical. I am thinking not only of the comparatively few Republicans who uphold what may for lack of a better term be called New Deal

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concepts, but of the ideological vagueness and inconsistency marking both parties. They appear to be much the same, both platforms almost interchangeable and a broad range of political opinion to be found among the leading figures of both, the Republicans running from Morse and Javits—until recently from Marcantonio—on the left, to Jenner and McCarthy on the right; the Democrats from Glen Taylor at the radical end of the spectrum to Harry Byrd at the other. Our major parties, perhaps to labor the obvious, are not political parties at all in the European sense; they are political clubs whose primary aims are to gain office when they are out of power and hold office when they are in, with this bond alone to keep them from splintering into fragments.

Yet this view of the major parties is essentially static and tends to lose its validity the longer one of them stays in power at the expense of the other. For the "outs," faced with the task of discrediting the "ins," increasingly take on the political coloration farthest removed from that of the *dominant group* of their opponents' party. For seventeen years Presidents Roosevelt and Truman have given the so-called liberal wing of the Democrats the upper hand. Both have conciliated the Southern Democrats for tactical reasons, but basically their administrations are identified in the public mind with social legislation of benefit to the underprivileged, with the growing power of organized labor, and with the concept that government has a direct and continuing responsibility for the economic welfare of the mass of the population. By way of political response, the Republicans have progressively turned their party over to control by the Tafts, the Millikins, and the Donnells, crusaders against the whole concept of the "welfare state." There are still men in the GOP whose views are essentially those of the New Dealers, but the party's center of gravity, as it were, has been shifted to the right, the better to oppose the Administration. Had the GOP won a presidential election in 1940 or 1944, this polarization might well have been arrested, but as matters stand, the fortunes of the Republican party are in fact a reasonable index to the conservative inclinations of the voters, and this regardless of exceptional candidates or campaign tactics. Given the figures I have cited, then, the Republican gains hardly seem significant enough to indicate a basic change in the political temper of the country.

COMMUNISM AND MCCARTHYISM: Of all the claims now being advanced by Republican spokesmen and political commentators, the least tenable, it seems to me, is that the country has given anything resembling a mandate to Senator McCarthy—or to the slightly more respectable Senator McCarran, for that matter. The well-warranted hostility to Russia and to Communists generally was of course a factor in many contests, but in furthering the myth that McCarthy won a kind of endorsement, in recognizing him as a force, in talking solemnly about his ambitions for a vice-presidential nomination in 1952, Washington correspondents, liberals included, are certainly doing their best to inflate him beyond all reason or excuse.

For the most part these Washington experts are judging McCarthy's effectiveness by the results in nearby Maryland. No doubt Senator Tydings' powerful and justified excoriation of McCarthy and his methods contributed to the Maryland Senator's defeat, but the most superficial study of the campaign will show how remote the results were from a mandate for McCarthyism. Tydings has always depended on a large conservative vote to elect him. His record in the Senate, it may be recalled, was so far to the right that Roosevelt once tried, futilely enough, to "purge" him in the party primary. As an upholder of the Taft-Hartley Act, Tydings this year more than ever had the opposition of labor, large sections of which openly endorsed his obscure Republican rival. He had also behind him an almost unbroken record in favor of racial segregation, and those who know Maryland's social situation believe that not more than a handful of Negro voters could have given him their ballots. On top of this the state's Democratic party had come through a bitter gubernatorial primary split

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from top to bottom. Tydings himself has described his party as "demoralized" and maintains that he foresaw the result as soon as the primary was over. That this is not mere rationalization is borne out by the fact that the Senator ran some 50,000 votes ahead of the Democratic candidate for governor, who was in no way involved in the McCarthy controversy. If that issue affected the results at all, it was only insofar as right-wingers, on whom Tydings had formerly counted, turned against him and there was nothing on the left to offset the loss.

Elsewhere in the country the effect of McCarthy's campaigning should recommend him for retirement rather than the vice-presidency. Senator McMahon, a Democrat who shared in the report denouncing McCarthy, won in Connecticut, although Wisconsin's gift to the nation personally appeared in the state to speak against him, and although the voters elected a Republican governor. In cities with large Catholic populations, leaders of the American Federation of Labor circulated letters pointing out that McCarthy's methods were contrary to the teaching of the Church. The Wisconsin Senator was, in fact, unable to fill a hall in Connecticut seating less than 600. In New York the one top Democrat to win was Herbert H. Lehman, the only Senator up for re-election who had voted against the drastic McCarran-Mundt-Nixon bill. It is true that Lehman benefited hugely from the famous Hanley letter episode, but this gain was largely offset by the loss he suffered through the "bullet vote" for Mayor Impellitteri in New York City. It is worth noting, too, that of the 18 Representatives who had had the temerity to stand up to the McCarran steamroller, 14 were re-elected. McCarran himself, by the way, did poorly in Nevada, winning by one of the smallest margins of his career.

I HAVE already referred to the Hennings victory in this connection, but perhaps the most striking example of McCarthy's ineffectiveness comes from his own state of Wisconsin. His colleague, Senator Wiley, a genial conservative of no distinction, was reluctant to have McCarthy campaign for him. Gauging the temper of his constituents, he went so far as to make public a letter from Acheson to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which the Secretary of State had thanked the members for their cooperation and mentioned Wiley, among others, by name. The Republican boss of the state took the opposite tack, however, and McCarthy was brought in to beat the bushes for Wiley, although any Republican is an odds-on favorite to win in Wisconsin in an off-year. Interestingly enough, not only did the state as a whole give the Republicans a lower proportion of the vote than in 1948, but their losses were most marked in precisely those counties where McCarthy had taken the stump. Eau Claire and Kenosha, which had delivered majorities to the Republicans two years ago, both went over to the Democrats after hearing their junior Senator. With one exception the Republicans lost ground in every county in which he appeared. They know these things in Wisconsin, where the new governor is already being groomed to contest McCarthy's seat in the GOP primary of 1952, even if the word has yet to reach the Press Club in Washington.

McCarthy's comparatively poor showing, it need hardly be said, was not necessarily an endorsement of Secretary Acheson, his prime target. Nobody can say how much of a factor Acheson was in the election, or the Administration's foreign policy itself for that matter. In the states I visited during the campaign there was remarkably little talk of either, and many Republicans conceded that the success of our forces in Korea at the time had weakened their party's chances. Had the election occurred six weeks earlier or six weeks later, the GOP would have made a great deal of the war in the Far East, but with the successful landing at Inchon and the flight of the North Koreans, Republican strategists were in no position to press the issue. In a sense McCarthy, too, may have suffered from our all too temporary military success, since it was difficult to charge the Administration with "softness" to Communists at the very moment when its

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bold action was routing them on the field of battle.

REBUKE TO ORGANIZED LABOR: On this score at least, I think that a generalization is in order. Labor, politically speaking, has been jolted by the returns. Never had the trade unions been so united in their political efforts and not even in 1948 had they worked harder to make a showing. Something like one million dollars was spent, volunteer workers were recruited by the hundreds, baby-sitters and transportation were provided to enable people to get to the polls, and elaborate campaign literature, including comics, was poured out in key contests. Special efforts were concentrated in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, Missouri, Colorado, California, Utah, Iowa, and especially Ohio. Yet, except for Connecticut and Missouri, the outcome was uniformly poor. The total vote, to be sure, was the largest ever recorded in a mid-term election, and union leaders are wanly pointing out that if they had not worked so hard the results might have been far worse. The fact is, however, that when the increased voting population is taken into account, the total should have been greater by at least five million votes.

What is much more to the point than the size of the vote, however, is the plain fact that even in large industrial centers with the highest concentration of trade union voters the returns on labor's investment were extremely thin. Ohio, of course, is the prime example. In 1944 Taft squeaked through by some 30,000 votes. This year he swept in by 340,000, carrying many normally Democratic districts. Cleveland, which had rejected him by 96,000 votes six years ago, gave him a healthy majority of 42,000. Similarly in New York, labor gave its official support to Walter A. Lynch for governor and, for the most part, to Ferdinand Pecora for mayor of New York City. Lynch made a poor showing in spite of the fact that Dewey lost upstate votes for his part in the sordid Hanley affair. City unionists obviously failed to respond to the plea of their leaders for Lynch, although his record in Congress was wholly on the labor side, and Pecora lost to an unknown. Of the ten Senatorial candidates on whom labor concentrated its chief expenditure in funds and energy, seven were defeated.

LOOKING at the picture in the large, it appears, then, that the election was not a "mandate" for conservatism, still less a Republican tide or an endorsement of the degenerate tactics of Senator McCarthy; but it was, nevertheless, a proof that organized labor is still far from being the political force that both its enemies and itself would sometimes have us believe. Perhaps the surprise over its comparatively poor showing is a measure of the exaggerated credit assigned to it for the Democratic victory in 1948. In that year Truman lost the industrial states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. He would have lost the election if he had not picked up the 56 votes of Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Of these only Ohio can be called an industrial state, and even there it was the rural areas that provided the necessary margin. Labor played an important role of course, but it appears to have been dazzled by the results.

Publicly, the political leaders of labor tend to minimize their losses this year, but in private there is a tendency to blame the Democratic party for saddling them with low-grade candidates like Joseph T. Ferguson, Taft's opponent in Ohio, and Lynch in New York. George Baldanzi, of the Textile Workers, made the point bluntly at the recent convention of the CIO. The same reaction is to be found in independent political groups of the left like Americans for Democratic Action and New York's Liberal party. In varying degree this raises the question of how far labor and liberal groups can expect to progress in harness with so shapeless, unpredictable, and basically aimless a political organism as the Democratic party. Assume, as we must, that no national third party is even to be thought of in the near future—there is no appreciable sentiment for it and it is only in the past two years that large sections of the AFL have been pried loose from the Re-

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publican party. Does it follow that labor must always choose the lesser evil—from its standpoint, in nineteen cases out of twenty, a Democrat? What would have happened, concretely, if, confronted by a choice between Taft and Ferguson, the labor politicians had simply said, in effect, "We prefer to see Taft lose, but we do not regard this as a test"? Taft would have won, as he has anyway, but labor would not be discredited by an outstanding failure. Neither would it have placed itself in the feeble position of advising the Democratic party that no matter whom it may choose to nominate, it can count on the labor vote. As a matter of fact, if Ferguson had won, labor would have borne the responsibility for his woeful inadequacies in the Senate of the United States. The Ohio campaign, in short, was a monstrous *gaffe,* which leaves labor weaker in its dealing with the Democrats and, more important, weaker in the eyes of the general public.

To a lesser degree, the same moral might be drawn by labor from the New York campaign, especially if those two instances are placed against the year's experiences in Connecticut and Missouri, where labor's support was extremely helpful in electing candidates of stature, and even in Pennsylvania, where it enabled liberal candidates to come surprisingly close to winning. The point is that labor is a force, and an important one, but it is not a political machine. It can contribute substantially where it has good material to work with, but it cannot slap a union label on a nonentity and expect even its own people, much less others, to vote for him. It can be of great help in appealing to the mass of voters along general liberal lines. But it cannot elect a man because he voted against the Taft-Hartley Act or defeat him because he voted for it. As long as labor supports a McCarran as a reward for voting right on specifically labor measures, as the AFL has done for many years, it cannot be regarded as a politically mature force. As long as it harps exclusively on its own interests, it will remain a special interest group and offer no promise of major political success. Hard work in the wards and precincts is vital, but it is not a substitute for discrimination or principle. It took labor seventy-five years to learn that electioneering was basic to its needs, and now its leaders are making a fetish of it, as though getting out the vote were more important than having some one worth getting out the vote for—some one who may or may not have voted for the Taft-Hartley Act but who has both the intelligence and the good will to use his office, broadly speaking, to promote the general welfare.

The emphasis here is obviously on the word "general." The mistake that most labor politicians make is to imagine that American trade unionists are only, or even primarily, trade unionists. Roughly a quarter of the population, with their families, they are also church members, Rotarians, parents, motorists, saxophonists, bridge players, movie-goers, and pursuers of all the multifarious activities that make up the middle-class life of a middle-class nation. Yet labor politicians, responding to the needs of a sign-painters' local, for example, will oppose a legislator who seeks to eliminate the billboard nuisance even though thousands of other unionists have the same interest in preserving scenic beauty as the rest of the community. This particular bit of short-sightedness occurred in Oregon, as State Senator Richard Neuberger has testified,* and the result was that labor's local political mentors were ignored by their own people at the polls and won only a black eye for their pains. Similarly, labor has been known to oppose permanent registration for no better reason than that it would mean less work for the printing trades. And McCarran's fierce xenophobia may even have recommended him to the AFL, which traditionally opposed liberal immigration laws out of the fear, once legitimate enough, that the influx of cheap labor was a menace to its own standards.

CAUGHT between the pragmatic but pointed interests of organized labor and the pragmatic but often pointless interests of the Democratic party, the independent liberal

* See his article "What Labor Unions Forget," in the *Nation,* December 23, 1950.

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who so enthusiastically supported Roosevelt tries to hew out a line determined by the best materials on hand. I doubt whether there has ever been an American election in which there was as much ballot-splitting as in last November's. In New York City scores of thousands voted for a Republican for governor, a Democrat for Senator, and an independent, so far as they knew, for mayor. Ohio elected a Democratic governor and a Republican Senator; Connecticut, a Republican governor and two Democratic Senators. In New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, city politicians continued to feel the trend against the party machine which has characterized the past decade in American politics. In part this rebellion was merely a reaction to the sordid corruption that has bubbled over in the large cities; in part it was an expression of resentment against the imposition of boss-picked candidates; and in part it was an indication of the electorate's growing ability to think independently.

Assuming in many states the leadership of what is awkwardly called the non-Communist left was Americans for Democratic Action. Industrious and effective far beyond the warrant of its numbers, the ADA selected, wherever it could muster the strength, the "better candidate" or the "lesser evil." Where it had been a factor in selecting the nominee to begin with—as in the case of Richardson Dilworth in Pennsylvania and G. Mennen Williams in Michigan—it was well off and gained considerably in prestige. But where it supported a Lucas, a Lynch, or a Ferguson, for whom it could only apologize, it came off, if anything, worse than labor. The unionists at least could point to the hope of a narrow gain for themselves, whereas the ADA appeared to be going along merely for the ride. With the urge to voting independence at an all-time high, both the Liberal party and the ADA supported Ferdinand Pecora for mayor of New York, and, however worthy an individual he may be personally, they now share the onus of his rejection by the public as the candidate of Tammany Hall. In the circumstances they cannot even expect to profit much by the eventual revelation that Impellitteri, the triumphant "independent," is merely the choice of a dissident faction of that same organization. Instead of providing a haven for the disillusioned, they have to some extent identified themselves with the object of the disillusion.

CERTAINLY there is nothing irretrievable in the situation, but sooner or later the ADA will have to decide whether it is to go on pressing within the Democratic party, and making the best of a bad deal when it fails to get what it wants, or to maintain a genuine independence, do a herculean job of education, and look toward an ultimate realignment in American politics based on program and principle. The plight of the non-Communist left here is almost the complete antithesis of the situation in France as Herbert Lüthy described it in the August issue of COMMENTARY. M. Lüthy wrote of the "staunch adherence" of the French left to "pure, abstract 'principles' which are assiduously safeguarded from practice, since 'politics is always a dirty business.'" The result of this scorn for any "political idea which is not a total vision" is a stagnation of thought and a paralysis of movement, an utter incapacity to distinguish the real from the ideal. Putting aside the remnant of the Socialist party and the few chips left over from the Marxist splinter groups of the 30's, no one can make a similar indictment of America's non-Communist left. It is schematic and ideological only by comparison with Harry Truman.

This quality in the ADA, it seems to me, flows from a number of sources. It is in keeping, first, with the background of many of its leading personnel, men who played a part in that greatest of all political improvisations, the New Deal. In part it is the reaction of its ex-Marxists to the sterility of splinter politics. Add to the compound the bitter fruits of Marxism in Eastern Europe; the ever more deeply entrenched position of the two-party system in this country; and, finally, the common conviction that with no time to organize new ventures, the Democratic party alone,

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for better or worse, stands between us and black reaction.

In the circumstances it is perhaps futile to bewail the absence of a coherent philosophy in organizations like ADA, much less to imagine that one can be concocted on order. Vastly poorer in content than its British counterpart, the theoretically arid American left is at least that much richer than the aridly theoretical left of France. But this is not to say that the ADA has not an obligation to foster and encourage the intellectual ferment out of which fresh ideas emerge, an obligation that cannot be satisfied by an exclusive preoccupation with electing this or that candidate, passing this or that bill. Even in terms of the immediate and practical, it cannot afford to plunge so deep into the maelstrom of precinct politics that its intellectual promise, its prestige, and virtually its independence are forfeit to the exigencies of the moment. Given its trifling numerical strength, the sacrifice is wholly unwarranted. The loss in potential leadership tomorrow is not offset by the additional vote it can deliver today.

Until the ADA, and whatever else there is of the American non-Communist left, can achieve a popular following, it has no choice but to steer a tricky course midway between the extremes of cynical campaign politics and cloistered ideology. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent it even now from reserving its support, not for Fergusons, Lynches, and Lucases, but for men and issues that have real relevance to its ultimate liberal purpose, meanwhile clarifying that purpose through discussion, study, and debate, until it becomes in itself a source of organizational strength. Picking lesser evils on Election Day may look like "realism," but it takes a faith to win converts.

MAGNIFICAT

HAROLD NORSE

Et *esultavit* . . . no, Johann Sebastian,
not in the weak magnificat
we (sickly) weave, a minor
banner of our praise. That

is not for us. *Suscepit Israel*. . . .
He hath received us O with cruel mercy
in the night like thieves like fallen lions.
Our exultation is not free.

But bound as Prometheus to the rock,
our liver eaten away by the vulture of God,
we have seen him put down the humble, exalt the mighty
—Abraham chained to the rock, covered with mud.

O Father Abraham, the Holy Spirit your praise
your glory, look on us now—! The seed
of the father in the tomb of the loins
rotting—and the worm within the creed!

HAROLD NORSE has published poetry and articles in *Sewanee Review, Accent, Tomorrow,* and various other periodicals. He recently completed his first volume of poems, *Interval in Summer.* He was born in New York City in 1918.

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SIMONE WEIL: PROPHET OUT OF ISRAEL

A Saint of the Absurd

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

"CAST aside all beliefs that serve to fill up emptiness or sweeten what is bitter: the belief in immortality; the belief that good somehow comes of sin, *etiam peccata;* the belief in the providential ordering of events—in short, all the 'consolations' that we ordinarily seek in religion.

"Ineluctable necessity, misery, distress, the crushing weight of poverty and of work that drains the spirit, cruelty, torture, violent death, constraint, terror, sickness—all these are God's love!"

When, in 1941, Simone Weil, the author of these extraordinary words, first met Gustave Thibon, the man who was to preserve them for us,* the scene promised to be a comic one, a series of burlesque misunderstandings. M. Thibon was a lay Catholic philosopher of peasant origin who preferred not to be called a theologian, though he had written several remarkable books developing a theory of the sublimation of erotic love to divine charity through the family. Simone Weil, a letter from a common friend had already informed him, was "a young Jewess, a militant left-winger, with a higher degree in philosophy," who wanted to try living close to the soil. Jew, radical, intellectual, back to the land!—she seemed a living cliché, so precise an epitome of all he considered the fashionable sham of a whole generation that M. Thibon feared for his reserves of patience and courtesy.

It would end badly he knew; for although —he naively assures us—he was "untainted, thank God, by any *a priori* anti-Semitism," he had known enough Jews to be convinced that the Jewish temperament was not only alien to his own, but quite unsuited to communal living, though much attracted to such attempts. As for Marxists and *agrégées de philosophie* on the land. . . . The first interview turned out to be quite as ridiculous as he had expected. Simone Weil, nervous, aware of her superficial unattractiveness and compelled to exaggerate it, talked at him endlessly in a maddening monotone, a brutal

*In a collection of aphorisms called *La Pésanteur et la Grâce* ("Down-drag and Grace"), published by Plon in 1948, and edited after the death of Simone Weil by M. Thibon.

FEW contributions to COMMENTARY have excited so immediate and intense an impact as Simone Weil's essay "Hitler and the Idea of Greatness," printed in our July issue. But this reaction was not untypical of the effect on the contemporary mind of the work of this writer, who died in England in 1943 at the age of thirty-four—a death brought about, at least in part, by self-inflicted starvation: although seriously ill, she refused to eat more than what made up the official ration in occupied France. At the time of her death, she was known in France—to the extent that she was known at all—as an eccentric and brilliant writer on politics and literature. After her death, a small group in the United States who had read translations of several of her essays knew her as a sensitive and eloquent moralist. In the years since, her reputation has steadily grown, and with the posthumous publication of her religious writings she has come to be regarded as one of the most significant religious thinkers to have been produced by France in the past two decades. Here LESLIE A. FIEDLER tries to find some of the keys to the personality and thought of this troubled spirit and ardent mystic who was born into a Jewish family, violently rejected her Jewishness, as she did most of the influences of her early life, lectured from the doorsteps, so to speak, of the Catholic Church, of which she never became a communicant, and wrote, along with much that is merely tortured and self-lacerating, winged words of moral and spiritual insight which men of all faiths find moving and relevant. Mr. Fiedler is associate professor of humanities at the University of Montana. His most recent article in COMMENTARY was "William Faulkner: An American Dickens" (October 1950).

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assault of talk that made it impossible to settle any practical problems, and left him physically exhausted.

Eventually, M. Thibon lost, in his love for her astonishing purity, his sense of the atmosphere of high comedy created by Simone Weil's inability to be charming on the human level, to be even "human" in any of the lower senses of the word; but the glimpse of her absurdity preserved in his memoir seems a vital clue not provided in other accounts of her life. Her pitiless pursuit of the absolute, her violence in rescuing religious belief from the "pious," are perhaps more important to remember in the end; but in the beginning one must dare to know her as a comic character, anti-heroic, a *shlemazl* and a *nar*.

SIMONE WEIL was born in Paris in 1909 of fairly comfortable people, her father a doctor, and both of her parents the sort of un-Jewish Jews capable of bringing her up without even a vestigial sense of any tradition alien to her Frenchness. At the École Normale Supérieure, she became a disciple of the philosopher Alain, a rationalist, a Platonist, an unconventional moralist—and a radical. Already she had begun to define herself in terms of the stock comic characters of the bourgeoisie: the female intellectual, the Jew who does not admit to being a Jew, the schoolteacher as small-town radical—and though young she was obviously marked even then for the extreme comic role of our civilization: the old maid.

Though she participated in left-wing demonstrations and marched on picket lines, the authorities refused to take her seriously enough to fire her. When a school inspector threatened the revocation of her teaching license, she replied that she had always foreseen such revocation as the crown of her career. But the license was not revoked; another crown awaited her, the crown of an anti-heroic heroism beyond the melodramatic dream of martyrdom of the young radical. (Much later, to be sure, she was refused a post under the Vichy regime, but this was for nothing she *specifically* was or had done; it was just as another Jew, almost anonymous, that she was rejected; and she did not even know how to admit that she was a Jew.)

Cheated of revocation, she decided to take a leave of absence to go to work in the Renault plant, a banal decision and fundamentally silly, the illusion of the Vassar girl of all lands that in a brief excursion into a factory she can get to know the life whose essential quality is its endlessness. For Simone Weil the outcome was more than usually distressing; not only did she suffer, not as a worker, but as an *agrégée de philosophie* desiring to suffer like a worker—but, ill to begin with, she was attacked by pleurisy and had to quit. In the disgust she learned to feel over her machine, she found a reward, but it was not the easy identification with the workers she had sought.

Regaining some measure of strength, she enlisted with the Loyalists in Spain (vowing all the while never to learn to use the gun she was given) and was hurt, not in combat, but in a trivial accident. Her grandest gestures were fated to end bathetically. Concerned with the possibilities of combining participation and non-violence, pondering the eternal, she forgot the "real" world of missteps and boiling water. Burned and badly cared-for, she was rescued from a field hospital by her parents, whose baffled but stubborn love was always coming between her and the denouement of agony to which she aspired.

During the Second World War, desiring to participate again, she worked out a scheme for being parachuted into occupied France to bring to the wounded members of the Resistance—not medical care, for she lacked even the simplest skills of healing, but her mere presence as a woman! What the military authorities made of this offer we can only guess; we know that they told her that her characteristically Jewish features might compromise her associates—but she had not even been remembering that she had a body, much less one that might bear the typical

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marks of a people in whose existence she did not believe.

She had no common sense, no sense of humor, no discretion—only an immense, naive seriousness and a contempt for reality. Encouraged by an imaginary gleam of response in the eye of a young peasant girl, she had once embarked on a series of lectures on the Upanishads that left her poor victim utterly bewildered, though too polite to stop her torrent of erudition. She was, in short, a bore—yet another role in the comic repertory. Capable of being only one thing to all men, and despising all strategies or etiquettes of discourse, she risked not only the snicker and the raised eyebrow, but often betrayal or serious political reprisals.

The only case of which I have read when her disregard for the limitations of other people did not produce an absurd anticlimax occurred in Italy, when she revealed to a stranger, in whom she sensed a growing weakness of resolve, the fact that she had fought in Spain. This impulsive decision to temper the shaky soul by temptation did not end in the denouncement which one might have expected; the stranger, though poor, resisted the rewards offered informers and said nothing. Perhaps, after all, this scene, too, remained in character; for to have found a Judas would have thrust her into the role of the betrayed, made of her the hero, and the hero to her seemed the mere *Ersatz* of the prophet or saint, the man who dies publicly for ultimate victory rather than in silence for failure's sake.

Even on the verge of her death in England, a semi-suicide at the age of thirty-four (she had refused, although weak and sick, to eat more than the rations allowed at that time in occupied France), she was baffled in her quest for absolute suffering by special attentions, being removed against her will to the comparative peace of the countryside.

Her eternally frustrated asceticism is a special modern instance: foiled by loving parents and kindly friends, even by impersonal hospital attendants in a world where the choice of the hairshirt is thought ridiculous or "pathological"—or even a hoax. For most of her life she had, however, one invulnerable advantage over her frustrators, being ceaselessly tormented by headaches (that ill, she called it, "which attacks me at the meeting place of body and soul"), that grew greater or lesser but never left her, and which had grown so severe in her early adolescence that for a long time she was at the very point of suicide. Later there were added the ravages of pleurisy, whose marks she bore until her death.

But her illness never seemed to her a sufficiently willed *askesis;* in factory life, in manual labor on the soil (she chose always the most difficult tasks and demanded of herself the same speed and competence as the most experienced workers, insisted on sleeping in the most miserable of quarters), she sought additional mortifications. What "everybody" longed for she ridiculously spurned. She had refused to leave Paris during the war until it had been declared an open city, and when life had become impossible for her parents in France and she had agreed to emigrate for their sake, she even succeeded in hating the United States to which they had fled. Its material comforts she found as humiliating and harmful to her vocation as the "spiritual" comforts of conventional religion.

Instead she plotted an underground return to France, or even emigration to the Soviet Union, whose politics she despised and where she could doubtless not have lived in freedom for a month. Among the Communists in France she had been known as a Trotskyite and had once been threatened with physical violence for delivering an anti-Stalinist report at a trade union convention. But the Russians were just then retreating before the German attack, and she felt obliged to "add a counterweight," to restore a proper balance; for with the defeated, she felt, was whatever could be found, in this world, of justice, "that fugitive from the camps of the victorious." One can barely

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imagine her in that improbable context, the pure Comedian, with the gun that would doubtless have blown off her fingers if she had attempted to fire it, flanked by the assured killers of "fascist beasts."

One thinks finally of Don Quixote, of Melville's Pierre, of the tragic buffoons who can never keep our time because they are set by the eternal chronometer—of the Holy Fool, whose wisdom is an unforeseen power of what we call stupidity, the ridiculous raised to the level of the ultimate, divine, absurd.

It is necessary to insist upon Simone Weil's religious vocation and her dedication to the absurd, because in this country she is likely to be known, if at all, mainly through the translations of her writings that appeared in Dwight MacDonald's recently demised magazine, *Politics*.* The emphasis of these articles is largely social; and in the context of a periodical with an outlook more purely "political," less mystical, complicated, and ambiguous than her own, they tend, I think, to misrepresent her. Such a piece as "Factory Work," for instance, with its final plea for the humanization of machine work, strikes one as naive and more than a little trite (its conclusions, taken alone, might be echoed enthusiastically by any personnel man trained in the Harvard Business School) until re-read in the light of the concluding aphorisms in *La Pésanteur et la Grâce*. "Why has no worker or peasant mystic written on the use of the disgust that arises from manual labor. . . . Disgust in all its forms is one of those most precious miseries granted to man as a ladder by which he may ascend. . . . No earthly finality separates the workers from God. Only they are in this situation . . . revolution is the opium of the people. . . ." Simone Weil has no sociology, properly speaking, certainly not in the final stages of her thought.

*"Reflections on War," February 1945; "The Iliad: or The Poem of Force," November 1945; "Words and War," March 1946; "Factory Work," December 1946.

Unlike true political or social thinkers, she is never concerned with the *solution* to war or poverty, but always with their *use*. She fears more than anything the proffered hope, utopian or "practical," which diverts the attention of the workers toward the future, toward consolation; the politics of redemption is, like any false religion, an opiate. It is true that Simone Weil's earliest writings, in the organ of the French Teachers Union or *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, a syndicalist journal, were political in the narrower sense she later eschewed; and that she felt obliged at one point to make a full-dress criticism of Marxism; but the culmination of her thought is meta-political. Politics and sociology were for her what rhetoric and women were for Augustine or exegesis of the Torah for Paul—that through which she moved to a final conversion, and consequently that which may have controlled the metaphors, but not the meaning, of her final belief.

Political activity was always a temptation for Simone Weil. Charity urged her to embrace causes that she knew in advance were imperfect, even radically wrong. Her absolute contempt for politics, paradoxically enough, made it possible for her to turn to compromises (her proposed journey to help the Russians, her joining with the Gaullists) that a quasi-absolutist radical would have found impossible. She never deceived herself, however; she knew that those causes which defeat made tolerable would in victory show the face of the Great Beast that lurked behind all political action. The hope of the City of God, as opposed to the fact of the Leviathan, was a hope only, never achievable in this world of necessity and force.

The articles in *Politics* are by no means without value; read in the light of their limitations, they provide a sense of Simone Weil's generosity, her passionate awareness of all human suffering, and the tension between involvement and withdrawal that characterizes her life. But only "The Iliad: or The Poem of Force" reveals her larger

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views and final values with any clarity. It is by far her best-known work and, together with two essays thus far untranslated into English (*"L'agonie d'une civilisation"* and *"L'inspiration occitanienne,"* both in *Cahiers du Sud,* August 1942), furnishes the best indication of her total viewpoint outside Gustave Thibon's collection.

THE language of the essay on the *Iliad* is especially remarkable, though Simone Weil affected to despise style (and it has been astonishingly well translated by Mary McCarthy, with the sort of warmth and lucidity seldom found together). In a single, gradual crescendo, it builds from its very first sentence until just before its close to a splendid height of pathos. Transported without a sense of display or melodrama to that peak of feeling, one wonders how one has got there, and cannot wait to return to the Homeric poem to see if the pathos has been legitimately deduced. It has not—not quite, I am afraid. The reading is a *tour de force,* but what we are presented with is an expurgated poem, the *Iliad* as a Christian epic —devoid of that celebration of honor, the boys' vision of *gloire* that nowadays half intrigues, half exasperates us, and lacking the personal story, the individualized tragedy of Achilles and his wrath—an epic in which all that for Simone Weil is foreground was for Homer mere background. And yet—as a partial reading and for its own sake, this version is not without delight and wisdom.

Here is the poem, as Simone Weil reads it. "The true hero, the true subject, the center of the *Iliad* is force. Force employed by man, force that enslaves man, force before which man's flesh shrinks away. In this work, at all times, the human spirit is shown as modified by its relations with force, as swept away, blinded, by the very force it imagined it could handle, as deformed by the weight of the force it submits to."

The rest of the essay specifies this generalization, showing it in the context of the Homeric poem, the degradation of the conquered as corpse and slave, and of the conqueror as the prey of *hybris* and *nemesis.* Against the degradation, the down-drag of force, only love can survive, and the victories of love are few and transitory. A note in the pamphlet edition of this essay prepared by *Politics* suggests that it may intend an "indirect commentary" on the fall of France —but it is more than that, almost a commentary on the fall of man, certainly one on the failure of politics, which is to say, war. "The purest and loveliest of mirrors," Simone Weil calls the *Iliad*—a mirror for politicians.

Politics is, after all, force; in intent the discreet control of force, but in fact the inevitable failure of that control. "A moderate use of force," Simone Weil says ruefully at one point, "which alone would enable man to escape being enmeshed in its machinery, would require superhuman virtue, which is as rare as dignity in weakness." That "superhuman virtue" she will later identify with grace, but at this point in her life she is unwilling to name it. She does not hesitate, however, to identify force, removing it from the sphere of the social to the metaphysical, by translating it first into necessity and then into matter, until the struggle is seen finally in Manichaean terms as the cosmic conflict of love and matter.

It is scripture that Simone Weil has been seeking at the walls of Troy and not a mere poem, and so she selects and distorts. The impersonal bitterness of Homer in the face of necessity (his gusto is ignored), his equity which refuses to distinguish between Trojan and Greek, she interprets as the spirit which culminates in the New Testament: the cry of despair from the cross and universal charity. The *Iliad* is Simone Weil's Pentateuch, with Plato her Prophets and the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles her Hagiographa. It is from these roots that she sees the Christian Gospels spring, for in her theory the Old Testament of the Hebrews is an evil book, justifying the Leviathan.

But to understand these views fully, we must turn to *La Pésanteur et la Grâce,* remembering that the Greeks of Simone Weil are not the sunny, assured pagans of

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the handbooks on the classics, but the inventors of holy despair.

"AGONY," Simone Weil has said, "is the supreme 'dark night' which even the perfect need to attain absolute purity; and to attain that end, it has to be bitter agony." This is a difficult doctrine in all times and places, and it is especially alien and abhorrent in present-day America where anguish is regarded as vaguely un-American, something to be grown out of, or analyzed away, even expunged by censorship; and where certainly we do not look to our churches to preach the uses of affliction. It is consolation, "peace of mind," "peace of soul," that our religions offer on the competitive market place; the means are different, the pew versus the analyst's couch or the newest best-seller, but the product promised is always the same: adjustment, the opposite of agony.

There is scarcely a Christian church that dares remind its faithful that the final words of Jesus were words of despair, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" But to Simone Weil that cry is more precious than the Beatitudes. "The extreme greatness of Christianity lies in its not seeking a supernatural remedy for suffering, but a supernatural use of suffering," she has said, and we remember that this was once, with perhaps more right, the boast of Judaism, before we swapped Job for Joshua Loth Liebman and the Prophets for "community service." Indeed, Simone Weil insists, his ability to suffer gives to man a superiority over God that would have been a cosmic scandal except for the "incarnation."

Of all the false comforts which the "believer" interposes between himself and the acceptance of agony that alone can purify him, none is more vicious than the hope of "immortality," understood as an assurance that the ego will go on and on in an infinite orgy of self-ness. To Simone Weil the ego is the enemy of Love, the screen between us and God, which we must "de-create" in the contemplation of misery and death, permitting God once more to become the Everything from which he withdrew in the act of creation. This more-than-suicide is the love which we must return for that affliction which is God's love for us, the awareness, at the bottom of all misfortune, of his absence, which is all of him that we can know as long as we are trapped in the ego. Misery frees us from the downward pull, the *pésanteur,* of false comforts and permits Grace to raise us out of ourselves. "Misery forces us to recognize as real, what we would not even have believed possible."

In our time the "atheist" is nearer reality than the kind of "believer" to whom the church is an illusory escape from terror. At least the atheist is unhappy! Non-belief may be a spiritual purification, doing for those outside the church what the exercises of the mystics must do for those within.

"Between two men who have no experience of God, he who denies him is perhaps closer to him."

"A case of contradictories, both of them true. There is a God. There is no God. Where is the problem? I am quite sure that there is a God in the sense that I am sure my love is no illusion. I am quite sure that there is no God, in the sense that I am sure that there is nothing which resembles what I can conceive when I say that word. . . ."

The last quotation exemplifies Simone Weil's essential method of speculation, her dialectic which gives to a casual reader the sense of inconsistency: God is everything and he is nothing; "revolution is the opium of the people" but revolutionary activity can discipline one to a true contempt for the social. "Method of investigation—" she has jotted down in a note to herself, "as soon as one has arrived at any position, try to find in what sense the contrary is true."

BUT there is a kind of knowledge certain beyond the possibilities of speculation. Notice that she has said above in the aphorism about who is closer to God, "between two men *who have no experience of him.*" Such experience she believed to be possible

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to those who have passed through the "dark night of the soul," either by way of the mystical exercise or through the secular purgation of political activity and agonized non-belief. Certainly, she was convinced that there had come to her such a direct, experiential knowledge of God—perhaps several times, though we have been given a description of only one such encounter.*

Just after her year as a factory worker had ended in total exhaustion and sickness, she was possessed by the sense of having become to the deepest level of her being a "slave," beyond any temptation to hope, and too weary for self-pity. There was left only agony and love. The name of God she neither dared nor knew how to think, but, she has written, "In a moment of intense physical suffering, when I was forcing myself to feel love, but without daring to give a name to that love, I felt, without being in any way prepared for it (for I have never read the mystical writers) a presence more personal, more certain, more real than that of a human being, though inaccessible to the senses and the imagination. . . ."

The immediate occasion of the experience is odd enough to notice. It is a touching case and strangely typical of the contemporary intellectual, compelled to seek underground in literature the uses and satisfactions of ritual, which he is inclined to despise without knowing. Simone Weil was saying to herself a piece of George Herbert. "I thought I was merely reciting a poem," she writes, "and I was saying a prayer":

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guiltie of lust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?
Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

THIS poem is essential to an understanding of Simone Weil's thought. Its final lines sum up her sense (deeply felt but only tentatively expressed) that there is a love in whose light our deepest intuitions are revealed as partial glimpses of paradoxes more wonderful than any we dare conceive. This is the Grace, the upward attraction that all the time secretly combats the downward tug of an earthly gravity everywhere only too apparent; and knowing it, we know that our misery is our joy, that God is our slave insofar as we have become slaves for his sake. Not all misery and abjectness is *per se* a way to this revelation, but properly used and cherished it can become such a way.

Simone Weil knew that there is a last trap even for those who deny illusory happiness, an *Ersatz* of holy suffering and sacred self-contempt—mere masochism and neurotic self-hatred. For every virtue there is a corresponding disease, and equivalent to the most splendid virtues the grossest sicknesses of the spirit. The end of the lower self-hatred is suicide, the destruction in despair of the possibilities of more ultimate suffering; the end of the higher self-hatred is "de-creation," the burning away in misery of all in us except that which responds to love. For those who can conceive of no "self" beyond that which is the captive of *pésanteur* and the flesh, it may be difficult to see the difference between the self-hatred of Simone Weil (or such chastisers of the flesh as Gautama Buddha or Moshe Leib of Sasov)

*In a letter to Joé Bousquet, printed in *Cahiers du Sud*, No. 984 (1947).

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and that of a pathological suicide like Otto Weininger. The understanding of such matters depends on what one makes the final ground of explanation: whether from the "psychological" point of view, one regards the striking resemblances between certain neurotic and mystical states as evidence that the latter are frauds; or whether from a religious standpoint, one takes such resemblances as evidence that everywhere the spirit tries to achieve certain relations with the divine that are continually baffled and parodied by a mocking counterforce.

Even from a pragmatic point of view, a self-conscious and principled self-hatred can be understood to have a mithridatic value, harmlessly purging away tendencies which, unrecognized and undeclared, might cause great psychic harm. And certainly self-hatred can be viewed as an *askesis* by way of which we may be delivered of enervating self-pity, and the even more dangerous impulse to project outward onto the Other that which we secretly despise in ourselves. To turn our malice inward away from the guilt-evoked lay figures of Jew, anti-Semite, homosexual, intellectual, or bourgeois, will lead us at least to do less harm to men if not prepare us to see the living God. Such a course is beset by the temptation to despair, and some may founder there; but beyond lies a more ultimate love than we can ever know this side of despair. Here is the ultimate *rite de passage,* the night-journey, the descent into Hell—from which we must not be deterred by the example of those who have not found the strength to emerge, or who, falling in love with the infernal, have chosen to remain.

In Herbert's poem, Simone Weil found her initial assurance of the reality beyond darkness, and the central metaphor of the poem stayed with her always.

"The great sorrow of man, which begins in childhood and lasts until death," she wrote much later, "is that looking and eating are two separate operations. Eternal beatitude is a state in which looking and eating are a single act." And her life itself works out strange variations of longing and repulsion on the theme: her death through fasting, her refusal to "eat" in the Catholic ritual act of Communion the God she had "seen" in ecstasy.

Simone Weil never became a communicating Catholic, though from that moment forward she desired desperately to be able to enter the Church. Like the great prophets of Israel, she required a vital priestly orthodoxy against which to define her revolt; and it was the Church of Rome that she chose to play the Deuteronomist to her Jeremiah. That she could not turn to Judaism is her tragedy and ours.

OF JUDAISM as a faith she knew nothing; neither she nor her parents nor two of her grandparents had ever seen the inside of a *shul,* and no voice was raised to attract her in an Israel narrowing on one side into mechanical orthodoxy and broadening on the other into secularism, Zionism, and sociology. To have considered herself a Jew would have seemed to her a betrayal of enlightened ethnology; her actual tradition she felt to be "Christian, French, and Greek." Indeed, what vague sense of an obligation to Jewry survived in her was expressed in revulsion, a passionate anti-Semitism that upsets for once her cherished method of honoring contradictories. She will admit no favorable interpretation of the mission of the Jews:

"*Israel.* All from Abraham on inclusively (except for a few prophets) is filthy and monstrous, as if on purpose. As if to point out with absolute clarity: Note well! here is evil! A people chosen for blindness, chosen to be the executioners of Christ.

"The curse of Israel weighs heavily on Christianity. The atrocities, the Inquisition, the liquidation of heretics and infidels, this was Israel. Capitalism was (and to a certain degree still is) Israel. Totalitarianism, especially among the worst enemies of Israel, is Israel."

"Anti-Israelism" or even, perhaps, "anti-Judaism" would most accurately describe the doctrines of Simone Weil in this regard,

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since it was the *beliefs* of the Jews that she especially despised; and yet she herself succumbs to the racism she attributes to them and their mortal enemies: "a *people* chosen etc." In her opposition to Hitler she would never admit the presence of any identification with the Jews; quite the contrary, she accused Hitler always of fighting the battle of Israel, seeking only to revive under another name and for his own benefit the God of Israel, "earthly, cruel, and exclusive." Sometimes, indeed, she insisted that Jehovah and Hitler were Gods in the same sense and on the same plane.

She had recast the whole history of the Jews in terms reminiscent of Houston Chamberlain, so that only her distrust of force seems sometimes to mark off her position from that of the persecuting anti-Semites. "God made purely temporal promises to Moses and Joshua at a time when Egypt was groping toward the eternal salvation of the soul. Having refused the Egyptian revelation, the Hebrews got the God they deserved: a corporeal and collective God who spoke to no one up to the Exile. . . . No wonder that a nation of fugitive slaves, conquerors of a land of milk and honey cultivated by civilizations whose labors they did not share but which they destroyed in a series of massacres, no wonder such a people was able to give scarcely anything good to the world. . . ."

Most of the writers on Simone Weil have chosen to slight this distressing aspect of her thought; but it is, alas, no peripheral vagary but rather an obsessive theme to which she recurs at the unlikeliest moments, even—as we have seen—in her piece on the *Iliad*. Typical in so many ways of the generation whose allegiances and revolts she turns improbably to the service of God, she must express, too, its deepest shame. Anti-bourgeois, radical, attracted to non-violence yet a participant in the Spanish civil war—she must also be a Jew and an anti-Semite, the anti-Semitic Jew, both sides of our most desperate cleavage in a single body. It is not inappropriate that the one contemporary writer she mentions with favor is Arthur Koestler.

It is easy enough to say at this point, with some of our defenders of an embattled secularism, that any Christian religious revival necessarily entails the exacerbation of anti-Semitism. But the immediate tradition to which Simone Weil belongs, the tradition of Léon Bloy and Charles Péguy, was before her violently philo-Semitic. Bloy, who scandalized the good Christians of his day by his fury and absolutism (he ran hurrahing through the streets when a church bazaar, with a few score of the conventionally pious, burned to the ground), doubly scandalized them by his defense of the Jews. "Each day in Communion I eat a Jew," he had cried out to his challengers, "and I depend on a bunch of Yids for my eternal salvation!" Involved in his attempt to redeem Christianity is the shame and guilt brought into focus by the Dreyfus affair and the consequent resolve to make it clear beyond doubt that anti-Semitism is a function not of a living Church but only of a dying one. From Bloy the tradition passed to Péguy and reached a climax in the attempt of Jacques Maritain to define a post-Christian mission of the Jews, and in his vision of Israel under persecution coming to resemble more and more the figure of Jesus. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him. . . ."

In the teeth of this tradition, Simone Weil denied to the Jews *any* mission, pre-Christian or post-Christian, except the negative one of embodying a species of evil, the idolatrous worship of what Plato had called the "great beast." As ancient Rome represented the "great beast" in its materialistic, atheist form, Israel represented it in its pseudo-spiritual form, the idolatry of the social as an *Ersatz* of religion. It is not as the "excluded" that she hated the Jews, but as the eminently successful, the inventors of nationalism; she could not include them, as had Bloy and Péguy, with the insulted and injured.

To Péguy and Bloy the Jews had been the Others, immune to the self-contempt these

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Christians preached as the beginning of wisdom; to Simone Weil, whatever she publicly asserted, the Jews were herself, her own. And upon them fell that pious hatred —oddly blended of the Gospel saying that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household" and the socialist teaching that one's own bourgeoisie was the worst enemy—which in her predecessors had been directed against the "good Christian." What makes this reaction finally illegitimate in Simone Weil is her terrible refusal to *live* her Jewishness, the quality which to everyone else seemed the very essence of her being. Her hatred of Israel could have been redeemed only by her accepting its pathos as her own.

AGAINST such an acceptance she defended herself by ignorance. Knowing nothing of Jewish mystical thought, she was able to remain undisturbed by the resemblances between her own doctrine and the traditions of Judaism. Though she knows the falsifications of anti-Semitic historians, she displays no real knowledge even of the Old Testament, much less of any of the later religious writers of the Jews. Immensely learned in Greek, and willing to devote much time to learning Sanskrit, she was apparently never even tempted to learn Hebrew.

"There can be no personal contact between man and God," she wrote. "Except through a mediator, the presence of God to man can only be collective, national. Israel simultaneously chose a national God and refused the mediator; though it may from time to time have tended toward a true monotheism, it always relapsed, and it *had* to relapse, to the tribal God." That in Israel, too, the problem of an absolutely transcendent God who can yet be apprehended personally was wrestled with in terms of the theory of *sephiroth,* she does not know. It is the dogma of Incarnation which possessed her imagination, and not the theory of Emanation; so that, exposed to the mystical experience, she cries out that Christ has taken her, unaware of even the name of the Shechina. The blame is not entirely hers; the frantic retreat from mysticism, the embracing of rationalism as a sufficient faith had made Israel inhospitable to the impassioned believer in her country in her time; and she, who might have been a prophet in Israel, sat on the doorstep of an alien church.

Though she entered no church completely and finally, it was the Roman Catholic Church of which she quoted again and again ". . . and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." She is even reputed to have helped convert others to that faith. "You are like the church bell," a monk, who was one of her dearest friends, once told her, "which calls others into the church, but itself must remain outside." At one point, just before her departure from France, she was on the verge of becoming a communicant, but at the last minute withdrew because the Roman Church was—too Jewish!

In identifying the God of Love of the Gospels with the Lord of Hosts of the Law, she believed, Catholicism had failed to purify itself of the abomination of Israel. Reviving an ancient heresy of the Gnostics, Simone Weil maintained the absolute discontinuity of the Old Testament and the New. Undisturbed by the mosaic of quotations from the Prophets and Psalms which determine the very pattern of the life of Jesus, and ignoring the source of the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," in Leviticus, she insisted that the Gospels were a work of the Greek genius, the culmination not of the Hebrew Scriptures, but of a tradition beginning with Homer and running on through the great tragedians and the philosophy of Plato (Aristotle she distrusted as a kind of Greek Jew). She could never forgive the Church for believing in the Jews as a chosen people, rather than the Greeks or the Hindus—or even the Egyptians!

AND yet, finally, there is a sense in which without violence this anti-Semite can be claimed as a Jewish thinker. She escapes all orthodoxy, to be sure, but it is perhaps as a Jewish heretic rather than a Christian one that she can best be understood. The

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slogan whose absence from the mouths of contemporary Christians she decried, the lament, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,"* Simone Weil could have heard on the lips of the Jews, who have never wholly forgotten the uses of despair. The regard for agony and suffering, the belief in the experience of alienation as a supreme proof of God's love, the unwillingness to yield up terror to consolation—these are qualities never entirely absent among the people she contemned.

Man's absolute exile from God, the non-presence and non-intervention of the *deus absconditus,* upon which Simone Weil so uncompromisingly insisted, can be found in the terrible dogmas of Lurianic Cabalism, and in that astonishing metaphor of the Zohar: the figure of *tsimtsum* or the withdrawal of God on himself, which conceives of our being as possible only in the interstices of the universe where God has willed his own non-being.

The refusal to speculate on immortality for fear of giving a lying reassurance to the lowest cravings of the ego, and of losing the absolute savor of death that can alone purify belief—this Simone Weil has in common with the main tradition of the Old Testament. And though she will not yield to the logic of her position and deny the possibility of a savior in time, she feels that Christianity, by moving the Redemption back out of a never attained futurity, has betrayed us to history and the heresy of progress. "The notion of history as a guided continuity is Christian. It seems to me that there are few ideas more utterly false."

The denial of impending redemption protects one from the temptation to demand in the kingdom of this world what is valuable only in the Kingdom of Heaven, as for instance absolute chastity, about which Simone Weil is silent, or absolute non-violence, with which she is greatly concerned. Her limited and reasonable pacifism, though not exclusively Jewish, would be more at home in the tradition of Johanan ben Zakkai than in some of the absolutist Christian traditions, Scriptural or Tolstoyan. And that is why she can answer with more certainty than Gandhi: "Non-violence is not good unless it is efficacious. So with the question of the young man to Gandhi about his sister. The answer should have been: use force, insofar as you are not able to defend her with as much possibility of *success* by non-violent means."

IT IS finally the note of zeal, the willingness to scream, to be ridiculous, to offend the standards of decorum and good taste, that makes Simone Weil, like Christianity in general, less Greek than Jew. The stone-cold doctrine of "nothing in excess" denies true fervor and true humility alike. The notion that the lukewarm shall be spewed out of the mouth of the living God comes, after all, from the Hebrews and not from her beloved Greeks, to whom any passionate commitment seemed a betrayal of reason, or a disease.

We have traced a common tradition backward from Simone Weil to Léon Bloy, but the ultimate source of that tradition is the prophet Hosea, the holy fool who married the harlot he had bought in the market place and called his son "Ye-are-not-my-people!" The absurdity, the absolutism, the incandescence of the prophets survive in Simone Weil, and for all her blemishes, their terrible purity.

That she insists on measuring us all, as she measures herself, by that ultimate standard of purity, embarrasses us. Before her assumption that we are worthy of being weighed in such a scale, what are we to say? "It's a lucky thing for all of us," a friend of Simone Weil's once told her, "that you are not God!" And that, perhaps, will do as a final word.

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CHANNEL CROSSING

GEORGE BARKER

AND just by crossing the short sea
To find the answer sitting there
Combing out its snakey hair
And with a smile regarding me
Because it knows only too well
That I shall never recognize
The verities that I should prize
And the lies that I should tell.

I saw the question in the sky
Ride like a gull to fool me, as
The squat boat butted at the seas
As grossly as through mysteries I
Churn up a frothy wake of verbs
Or stir a muddy residue
Looking for the answer who
Sanctifies as she disturbs.

The horror of the question-mark
Looking back I saw stand over
The white and open page of Dover
Huge as the horn of the scapegoat. Dark
It stood up in the English day
Interrogating Destiny
With the sad lip of the sea:
"What can a dead nation say?"

As these words wailed in the air
I looked at Europe and I saw
The glittering instruments of war
Grow paler but not go from where
Like a livid sunset on
The marble of the horizon
They lay foretelling for tomorrow
Another day of human sorrow.

But when I turned and looked into
The silent chambers of the sea
I saw the displaced fishes flee
From nowhere into nowhere through
Their continent of liberty.
O skipping porpoise of the tide
No longer shall the sailors ride
You cheering out to sea.

I thought of Britain in its cloud
Chained to the economic rocks
Dying behind me; saw the flocks
Of great and grieving omens crowd
About the lion on the stone;
I heard Milton's eagle mewing
Her dereliction in the ruin
Of a great nation alone.

That granite and gigantic sigh
Of the proud man beaten by
Those victories from which we die;
The gentle and defeated grief
Of the gale that moans among
Trees that are a day too strong
And, victorious by a leaf,
Show the winner he was wrong.

The continent of discontent
Rose up before me as I stood
Above the happy fish. Endued
With hotter and unhappier blood,
Contented in my discontent,
I saw that every man's a soul
Caught in a glass wishing bowl:
To live at peace in discontent.

O somewhere in the seven leagues
That separate us from the stricken
Amphitheatre of the spirit,
O somewhere in that baleful sea
The answer to sad Europe lodges,
The clue that causes us to sicken
Because we cannot find and share it,
Or, finding, cannot see.

So in the sky, the monstrous sun
Mocked like a punishment to be,
Extending now to you and me
The vision of what we have done:
And as the boat drew to the quay
I thought, by crossing this short water
I shall not find, in its place,
The answer with the silent face.

GEORGE BARKER is one of the brighter luminaries of the newest generation of British poets. His latest book of poems is *News of the World,* recently published by Faber and Faber, London.

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THE BOHEMIAN WHO WROTE "HATIKVAH"

The Career of Naphtali Herz Imber

GERARD H. WILK

FORTY years ago a man collapsed on Forsyth Street on the Lower East Side and subsequently died in Mount Moriah Hospital, of starvation and cheap liquor. The Rivington Street congregation refused the use of its synagogue for funeral services; services were finally held in the Attorney Street synagogue. When the coffin was brought to Mount Zion cemetery in Long Island, the streets along the way were lined with people singing the dead man's songs—for he had been a poet. The songs were in Hebrew. One of them was called "Hatikvah"—"The Hope."

When the State of Israel was founded two years ago, it surprised no one to hear that "Hatikvah" had become the national anthem. Somewhat later a movie entitled *Hatikvah* was produced in New York, with shots of Israel accompanying the song, and at the preview someone asked who had written it. Silence filled the studio. Finally a girl with a background of French films and Zionism ventured a name: "Uh—Ubairr, wasn't it?"

It wasn't. It was Imber. Naphtali Herz Imber of Zloczov.

Today you can find "Hatikvah" in the New York Public Library, under the letter *I* in "Hymns of the United Nations." You will find a copyrighted English text by Dr. Such-and-such, and beside it the Hebrew text—without author. Ask a hundred people interested in Jewish things whether they happen to know who wrote the anthem, and ninety-nine will be silent. The man is as unknown to ardent American Zionists as to the young Israelis, who know not only "Hatikvah" but other songs of his by heart.

A few books on eccentric personalities mention Imber's name in passing. There are encyclopedias that call him "the first romantic Hebrew poet since Judah Halevi" and let it go at that. His obituaries, after some derogatory comment on his way of life, compared him to Poe, Verlaine, and Villon—one American and two French drunkards of genius. His immortality is credited to Israel Zangwill, who caricatured him as a *shnorrer* poet. But today Zangwill's books are gathering dust on library shelves, unread, while Imber's songs are on the lips of a nation.

His immortality rests on his songs. What has been forgotten is an intriguing personality and the colorful life of a Jewish minstrel who dedicated his first poem to a European emperor and his last to an Asiatic one, who spent his youth between castles and the gutter, had great ladies dry his tears when he was a grown man, and drank himself to death on a dollar a day from a member of the United States judiciary.

"Poor Imber," his Yiddish necrologer sighed in 1909. "They were all so ignorant of him!"

Those who did know him, who lined the streets of New York after his death and were proud of him in the unhappy lands of Eastern Europe, are now all but extinct. Recently his name came up in conversation with a native Palestinian lady and an Israeli of-

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JEWS all over the world are familiar with the song "Hatikvah," now the official anthem of the State of Israel. But few know the name and fewer still the history of the man who wrote it: Naphtali Herz Imber. GERARD H. WILK here tells of the life and work of Imber—bohemian, poet, wit, and the original of Israel Zangwill's *The Jewish Hamlet*. Mr. Wilk was born in Berlin in 1902 and earned the degree of Doctor of Laws at the University of Göttingen. He lived in Yugoslavia from 1933 until 1941, when he was interned by the Italians. After his liberation he worked for some time for the United States Office of War Information and since 1946 has lived in New York, where he has worked with the Voice of America and with NBC. Before 1933 Mr. Wilk published numerous articles in German periodicals, for which he has again been writing since the end of the war.

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ficial. The *sabra* had never heard of him; she was not interested, either. She disliked "Hatikvah"; in her opinion it could not hold a candle to real Hebrew folk songs: *"Mishmar Hayarden* for instance—" The young lady (who knew seven languages, by the way, along with their literature) could hardly believe that "Watch on the Jordan," the old song of Palestinian pioneers, was written by the same man. But the servant of the world's newest state spread his hands: *"I* shouldn't know Imber? When he was born in Zloczov?"

He was born in Zloczov, Bukovina, on December 27, 1856. This seems to be the correct date, although some other sources give the year as 1854, 1857, or 1858. Imber's stature is not such as to have these minor discrepancies noted in works of reference.*

Bukovina is a bleak, overcrowded, perennially poverty-stricken back country in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. *In Half-Asia,* a 19th-century novelist entitled his stories about the region. In those days it was the easternmost part of the Austrian Empire, in the crown province of Galicia. A small, German-speaking bureaucracy governed the native Ruthenians, Rumanians, Carpatho-Russians, Gypsies, and Jews. The people were seldom restive. To console them in their drab existence there was always the knowledge that things could be worse—a few miles north or east, under Russian rule, for the Jews, and a few miles south, under Turkish rule, for the Christians.

The Jews of Bukovina were as poor as the rest of the population, but they were its blood and bile. They kept it functioning in the market place and served as outlet for its rages. They traded, peddled, and were beaten up. At the same time they "learned"—in the Jewish sense of the word—and lived according to an old Jewish, especially Eastern Jewish, *idée fixe:* that learning goes before wealth, and that it is the rich man's privilege to enable the scholar to pursue wisdom.

They used to tell in Zloczov that one day a famous rabbi came to town, following a rumor that it harbored an *ilui,* a prodigy: a ten-year-old who studied the Zohar. Little Naphtali was brought to the synagogue; the examination turned into a dispute; eventually the rabbi declared himself beaten. He congratulated the community on a child who would no doubt be the peer of the greatest *rabbonim,* but the elders sadly shook their heads. The visitor asked why, and was told that on the Sabbath, while his family was at the synagogue, the boy used to invite all the beggars in town to food and what he could find of his father's money. The rabbi smiled: good deeds might excuse the profanation of the Sabbath. The elders went on: when he was not stealing from his poor father, Naphtali would spend the Sabbath with the daughter of rich Samuel Auerbach, studying German. The rabbi frowned, but said that thirst for knowledge might excuse the profanation of the Sabbath. They continued: once, coming home before his father, Naphtali felt hungry and saw a cock in the yard; so he ran to his mother, kissed her, and cajoled: "Why wait for Father? Can't the cock make *kiddush?"* This, as the story goes, so shocked the rabbi that he left town and never came back.

The little tale sounds made up, and it probably was. But there is the whole of Naphtali Herz Imber in it, as well as his fate.

His father's name was Samuel Jacob; nothing further about him is known except that he was poor, rigidly orthodox, and generally on bad terms with his prankish son. By way of compensation the boy attached himself to his mother. She called him "Herzl"—we may note that his middle name Herz means "heart" in German, as in Yiddish. He remained devoted to her for the rest of his life. In a sense, he reflected her in his life. Though her name, Hodel, is the only recorded fact we have about the poet's mother, we know her through her son.

There were other children in the family. Two, at least, were boys—one, as an old man, wrote his brother's only existing—desultory and defensive—biography for a selected edi-

*I owe an acknowledgment to Mr. Abraham Berger of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library for invaluable assistance in the translation of Hebrew documents by and about Imber.

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tion of his works, published in 1929 in Tel Aviv, in Hebrew, and never translated into another language. Then there was a sister, Nechamah. She was three years younger than Herzl, who seems to have been insanely jealous of her. His brother, without suggesting a reason, relates that Herzl never spoke to the girl, could not stand looking at her, and kept asking why she was not thrown out of the house. The only break in his correspondence with his mother came when she dared to tell him in a letter that his sister had married. He stopped writing for a year.

He once said he had been a deaf-mute and paralyzed until he was seven. Perhaps he was speaking metaphorically; no such fact is mentioned elsewhere. Anyway, he caught up fast, although we have it on his brother's authority that the *behelfer,* the assistant and truant officer of the *cheder,* had trouble getting him to school. It was "poorly conducted," Imber said many years later. But at eight he was said to know more than the fifteen-year-olds; and at ten he was an *ilui,* a full-fledged Talmudist and a student of Cabala who was allowed to preach in the "Grosse Shul"—not sermonizing in the Western sense, of course, but soliloquizing during the general inspirational exegesis that was the main part of Jewish worship in those days and lands.

HE PREACHED and learned in the Great Synagogue, and we are told that while all others learned noisily, in Hasidic fashion, he would learn quietly. He read all day and all night. With Miss Auerbach he read the German books in her father's library. She was much older (going on twenty, perhaps—an age when a good Jewish daughter should be married), and she seems to have given the boy the intellectual guidance that his own mother's love could not provide. He read German poems and started writing some of his own, but neither in German nor in his native Yiddish, only in Hebrew. In the tongue of David and the prophets the ten-year-old wrote verse. On Biblical subjects? Not Herzl. His first poem dealt with the Austro-Prussian War of the past year, 1866, and his second with the civil rights granted to Austrian Jews by their Emperor after he had lost the war.

Enfranchisement meant little to the Imbers, but to the Auerbachs it meant a lot. At their house young Imber heard the new, liberal Austria praised to the skies. So far he had mainly associated Francis Joseph with the gendarmes who arrested you "in the name of the Emperor," usually as a prelude to twenty-five lashes. Now, when his next inspiration produced a patriotic Hebrew poem, "Austria," he sent it to Vienna, humbly dedicated to His Majesty on the impending centennial of Bukovina's annexation to the monarchy. In due time the twelve-year-old heard from his sovereign. He got a personal letter of thanks and a fortune: twenty-five guilders. "The Emperor," he observed, "always gives twenty-five, guilders or lashes."

Soon after, rich Samuel Auerbach's daughter suddenly died and Herzl Imber left Zloczov. He never came back.

He went to Brody and Lemberg (now Lvov), the cultural centers of Galicia. A Dr. Levinstein took the young scholar into his house and arranged for his further education. He associated with men familiar to students of 19th-century Jewish intellectual life—Schorr, Krochmal, Mussen—and wrote for Herschel Schorr's periodical *Hehalutz* (a word which then simply meant a pioneer in progress and general enlightenment). But Brody and Lemberg could only hold him for a few years. They were way stations. There was a tide of youth rolling westward to the cities of Europe, to their universities and theaters, academies and laboratories, cafés and salons, to the knowledge and the civilization of the West; and the gate to the West was Vienna. Imber let the tide carry him. He left Galicia for Vienna. The *peyes,* the mark of his origin, vanished en route. At fifteen he arrived in the imperial city on the Danube, a modern young man.

He tried to see the only correspondent he had in the capital, and he succeeded. Francis Joseph of Austria was not in the habit of granting audiences to Jews, least of all to poor Jewish boys from the East, but he received Imber. Afterwards the youth got another royal present of twenty-five guilders,

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and though he had no actual or potential source of income he sent the whole amount to Zloczov, to his mother.

In leaving Vienna he marked himself off for the first time from a hundred thousand others of his kind. The tide was running westward, but he turned east.

He followed the Danube down to the Black Sea, through Hungary and Serbia, to Rumania (or, to be historically exact, to Wallachia and Moldavia, the two Danube principalities under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Porte) and to Bessarabia. He traveled without money or luggage, walking much of the time, accepting hospitality when offered and employment when necessary. But he was no *shnorrer* making the round of Jewish communities, no tramp, no itinerant Torah student; he fitted into no category. Actually he was a medieval atavism, a relic of the extinct species of wandering minstrels who used to pay their way in song and story, wit and wisdom. A line of kinship runs from Syskind of Trimberg, the Jewish minnesinger of the 12th century, to Naphtali Herz Imber of the 19th—always broke but never without something to give to the needy; his pockets always bulging, but only with scraps of paper scribbled full of Hebrew verses.

He had a happy time. Of course he had no documents attesting his right to live, let alone to gad about the Balkans, but he seemed to need none. He crossed one border by showing officials a year-old Austrian railway ticket stub in lieu of a passport. He crossed another as the part-time secretary of a general. If he had to work, he managed to do it for the nobility. They ate much better and were more appreciative of culture. In 1876 we find him tutoring in Baron Moshe Waldberg's castle near Jassy in northern Moldavia. From the hilltops one saw the Austrian border, but it had ceased to stir patriotic feelings in Imber. Bukovina was just beyond the border; it was barely a day's trip home. But if he thought of home now he thought in Hebrew verse.

Between teaching German and the three R's to the junior Barons Waldberg he wrote a song about home. It had nothing to do with Zloczov. Home was not Zloczov; it was none of the innumerable Zloczovs where Jews had been living as strangers for two thousand years. Their synagogues echoed with the lament of the banished. They prayed to go home from force of habit, without hope. Their mood annoyed the nineteen-year-old in the Rumanian castle. He scrawled eight angry stanzas against it on a piece of paper and above them: "*Tikvosenu*—Our Hope."

Kol od balevov p'nimo
Nefesh Yehudi homiyo
Ul'faase mizrach kodimo
Ayin l'Tsion tsofiyo

Od lo ovdo tikvosenu
Hatikvo hanoshono
Loshuv le'erets avosenu
Le'ir bo Dovid, Dovid chono.

(So long as in our heart of hearts
A Jewish pulse is beating,
And Eastward to the Orient
We cast our eye to Zion—

Our ancient Hope will not be lost,
Our age-long aspiration
To turn back to our father's land,
To the city where David dwelt.)

The paper joined the others in his pocket.

In the following year a war broke out. The Balkan peoples rose against their overlord, the Sultan, calling on the Czar for aid in his capacity as protector of Christendom. The response was quick; the first objective of the Russian troops was Jassy. What followed—the Russo-Turkish War, its casualties, its atrocities, the Russian triumph, and the end of Turkish power in Europe—is history. Imber seems never to have mentioned it. He must have been in the thick of the fighting but it did not concern him. Only the instinct of a Jew raised on the Russian border prompted him to stay out of the Cossacks' way.

The end of the war found him in Constantinople. His instinct was sound; it kept him out of the wave of pogroms that for

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three years terrorized the Jews of Russia and the newly "liberated" Balkans. On the other hand, conditions in the vanquished empire's refugee-swollen capital were worse than any Imber had yet encountered. He was forced to earn his living as a peddler—his only excursion into the realm of business, for which he had so little talent. To Imber, putting himself and his pocketful of poems behind a pushcart was to touch bottom. After a while he was catapulted to the top of the world.

IN THE summer of 1882 an English gentleman came to Constantinople as field representative of the Mansion House Relief Fund for Persecuted Jews. A man in his fifties, of striking looks and irresistible charm, he traveled with his wife who was twenty years younger and by all accounts one of the most fascinating women of her time. After three weeks in Lemberg, organizing the reception of the Russian fugitives and sending some to America, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Oliphant came through Bukovina, Rumania, and Bulgaria to the Sultan's capital for exploratory talks with Turkish officials about resettlement of refugees in Palestine.

They themselves settled on Prince Isle near Therapia, the fashionable suburb on the Bosporus. According to Mrs. Oliphant's first letter home, her household there included "a Hebrew scholar required for the Hebrew and German and Rumanian correspondence." The scholar was Imber.

How he got there from behind his pushcart remains unknown. It is possible that among the thousands of frightened Jews the Oliphants had met in passing through Bukovina there was a woman from Zloczov who kept talking of her son, her Herzl, who was in Constantinople and a linguist and a prodigy. It is difficult to think of any other reason for a letter that Mrs. Oliphant sent to Zloczov from Therapia, telling the old woman not to worry, she would "care for Herzl like a mother." Nor would a different hypothesis fit Imber's lasting impression of having been received "as a beloved child" by Laurence Oliphant and his wife.

They were two remarkable people. Laurence was a favorite of Queen Victoria's, a friend of the Prince of Wales, a darling of international society; he had been a world traveler, diplomat, war correspondent, novelist, businessman, a man of the world and its affairs—and for the past fifteen years the slave of an American religious impostor. He had quit Parliament to join the Brocton-on-Erie brotherhood of this "prophet," T. L. Harris, signed over all his fortune to it, and toiled as a farmhand. Sent to Europe by Harris, he had met and converted Alice le Strange, an English society beauty; they married and went to Brocton, where she also worked at menial tasks. So did Lady Oliphant, Laurence's aged mother. It took the death of his mother (as well as "most irritating conditions" imposed by Harris—the core of whose creed was a kind of sexual mysticism—on Alice and him) to make Oliphant rebel. He split the brotherhood, sued to recover a part of his money, and returned with his wife to the Old World in order to lead the remnants of the Chosen People back to the Holy Land.

IT WAS a religious idea he had conceived some years before and tried to sell to the Sultan on a political and business basis, with the backing of Benjamin Disraeli's British government, but without success. Now, backed by the Rothschilds and Montagus on the Mansion House Fund committee, he meant to try again on a humanitarian basis.

"When I first met him in Constantinople," Imber said later, "my own Cabalistic mysticism no doubt had its influence on him. . . ." Oliphant had been a mystic for decades. It was natural for him to be drawn to the young expert on Cabala; along with personal sympathies, this common interest unquestionably helped to keep Imber at the Oliphants' for years.

They were busy years. He was secretary, research assistant, Mosaic expert, Hebrew teacher, and English pupil. Late in 1882 the Oliphants moved to Haifa; Laurence had quit his relief job, and on Mount Carmel the couple gathered some German and American admirers into a community like Brocton, but

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with a creed of their own. Imber came along and, according to the grudging admission of some writers of biographical sketches, "greatly helped the young Yishuv." It was the time of the First Aliyah (immigration to Palestine about 1890); Russian Jews were laboring in the first, Rothschild-financed colonies, and Imber kept up a running press feud with the Rothschild officials, trumpeting his own and Oliphant's criticism of their mismanagement. He traveled a good deal, in and out of Palestine. He was at the founding of Petach Tikvah. He was in Jerusalem frequently, arguing with Hebrew journalists and making friends with European scientists. He went to Egypt with Professor Vernie of Paris to study the Pyramids, and to Beirut, at Oliphant's expense, to study watchmaking. He wrote poems all the while.

Those were fruitful years. He contributed the "Hebrew Testimony" in *Sympneumata or Evolutionary Forces Now Active in Man,* Oliphant's main work (according to Imber, it was "largely the work of his wife, a genius in her way"). He wrote one article after another for the two Hebrew papers in Jerusalem, *Hatz'vi* and *Havatzelet.* He was the first to call the new settlers *halutzim,* and today no one remembers the older sense in which Imber had come to know the word in Galicia. Then a volume of his poetry was published in 1886 in Jerusalem, entitled *Barkai* ("The Morning Star") and dedicated to Oliphant. It included the Palestinian poems as well as those Imber had brought along with him from the Balkans. One was *Tikvosenu.* Another, written in Rishon le-Zion, was *Mishmar Hayarden,* which Israel Zangwill was to translate into English:

Let the trumpet be blown,
Let the standard be flown!
Now set we our watch. . . .
Our watchword, "The Sword of our Land
and our Lord!"
On Jordan now set we our watch. . . .

A third was the "Cradle Song Hagdi" that is still sung to the children of Israel.

Those were happy years. He later talked about them with great candor and an almost naive simplicity. His relations with the Oliphants remained a source of eternal wonder to him; he used to list the witnesses to every episode as if he could not quite believe his own stories. The "beloved child" theme ran through them all. In the third person, as though ashamed to brag, he told of "childish kisses," of what would happen "as he was petted" by Mrs. Oliphant, of occasional quarrels: "It was about midnight, in the presence of Mr. Oliphant and the said doctor, that Mr. Imber sat on her knee like a child, and when she tried to persuade him to stay he told her he would rather be in purgatory than in her home. The noble Mrs. Oliphant understood him. She turned to Dr. Buckner: 'My Herzl is a prince, and a noble one.' "

He was in his mid-twenties, she in her mid-thirties. Oliphant was old enough to be the father of both, and a kinder, more understanding father than the one Herzl Imber could not get along with at home; but it was Oliphant's wife whom he adopted as a mother without cherishing his natural one any less. Alice was all that the woman in Zloczov was not: young, beautiful, well-born, cultured. "Noble" was his invariable adjective for this pearl of great price. To be able to sit on her knee, to pour out and receive the only kind of love he ever yearned for, he turned himself back into a child. Indeed, though he collaborated on *Sympneumata,* the fundamentally erotic nature of the Oliphants' mysticism seems to have escaped him altogether.

And yet the Oliphants caused the first of the odd silences that shroud Imber's life. The inevitable mass of material about people of the Oliphants' standing and eccentricity was gathered, edited, and published after their deaths by a writing cousin; but this *Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice, His Wife,* makes no mention of Imber except for the few words cited from Alice's first letter from Therapia, on the nameless Hebrew scholar. It seems even more curious if we consider that this one reference dates from a time when Imber was

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new at the Oliphants', when he could not be as close to them as he was bound to be later, after years in their house. But perhaps the silence is not so puzzling. The *Memoir* was a defense of the memory of the Oliphants, intended to counteract wild rumors about their creed of "sympneumatic love"—an involved mystery whose foremost practical aspect was sexual self-abnegation in the face of great temptation. Naphtali Herz Imber and his odd, infantile bliss did not fit into the strategy of the defense.

On the day after New Year's, 1886, Alice Oliphant died of a fever caught on a trip to Tiberias. Her husband was crushed; but the establishment of "sympneumatic" contact with her spirit soon made up for his loss. His next book was dictated by her from the Beyond. He became her tool on earth. He even remarried in 1888, in England, because Alice needed "a human assistant of her own sex." Some months later he died of cancer, and the end, according to the second Mrs. Oliphant, was "complete and perfect peace."

By then Imber was no longer in Palestine, either. He had left the year after Alice's death. Nothing made up for his loss.

THE second and sad part of Ahasuerus Imber's travels began as he departed from Palestine—in the phrase of one Jewish literary historian—as a "semi-vagabond." Having come to the Oliphants as a complete vagabond, he would seem to have improved. His brother reports that he first went east, to Bombay, and then doubled back for his long delayed encounter with the West, with Paris, Berlin, and London. No corroborative evidence exists on Paris, Bombay, or Berlin; that he turned up in London we know from the action of a more abiding trait than human kindness: human malice.

London on the threshold of the 1890's was the metropolis of liberalism triumphant, especially for Jews. Shylock and Fagin were dead and gone; the lowliest residents of Whitechapel could now be shown sympathetically to the fastidious and sophisticated readers of *Pall Mall Magazine*, as demonstrated by one of Britain's youngest and most promising literati, twenty-five-year-old Israel Zangwill. His column was called "Without Prejudice," and written with the all-comprehending, all-forgiving condescension of a Victorian liberal. He was the prototype of what might be described as a "re-assimilationist": a Jew steeped to the marrow in the outlook and way of life, the mores and standards of his Gentile fellow citizens, who made a terrific effort to prove to himself and everybody that he really belonged elsewhere. As usual in such cases, he never fully convinced those he tried to resemble. "The ghetto explorer," they called him in Yiddish.

An authentic Hebrew poet, newly arrived in London from Palestine, was grist for Zangwill's mill. He immediately appropriated Imber. They became "dear friends." Zangwill took Hebrew lessons from Imber, polished the English that Imber had learned from the Oliphants, and invited him to write for his *Jewish Standard*. Imber wrote about King Solomon. "But not," he said later, "as the Jews like to see him"—and presumably not as Zangwill liked to see him either. The plot thickened when Zangwill thought he knew enough Hebrew, and Imber thought the wealthy young Londoner might go on paying him anyway. A man who thought so was a *shnorrer* in the eyes of Zangwill.

Imber and Zangwill were like East and West, though each strove to be like the other. In the "Half-Asia" where Imber was born, the relationship of material and spiritual wealth was as Oriental as in the Arabian Nights or in India. Herzl Imber had been helped by the Auerbachs, by Dr. Levinstein, by rich men in Galicia and all over the Balkans; in Palestine he lived off the Oliphants as a matter of course, while his prodigious writing was probably done free of charge. When he had money or money's worth he would give it away. The fact that he was "a modern Diogenes," that "his wants were few and easily satisfied," was not discovered until want had killed him.

A lady who liked him marveled that he "would rather toss away a bag of gold in one *beau geste* than eat!" Yet he liked to eat, as much as anyone. The English-style break-

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fasts served by Alice Oliphant in the lovely house at Dalieh on Carmel kept hovering before his mind's eye in his later, leaner days. One of the early poems in *Barkai* said, "What will a paean help me in my tomb? . . . Give me bread, Muse, and clothes for my body—that I ask!" He was no ascetic. He simply failed to understand the Western equations for ideal values and "real values," and the techniques which our modern civilization has evolved for turning the first into the second. His mode of living was attuned to the East; in the West the most charitable word for it was "unconventional." He wanted to be modern, but the philosophy of materialism was beyond him. He could adopt only the trappings of the West: a cane, nationalism, alcoholic beverages, and the scientific explanation of miracles.

Imber had spent less than two years in England when a worldwide bestseller came from Zangwill's facile pen, a novel with the title *Children of the Ghetto* and the subtitle "A Study of Peculiar People." One of the peculiar people was a Hebrew poet, Melchizedek Pinchas. "Pinchas was indeed a figure of mark, with somebody else's frock-coat on his meager person, his hair flowing like a dark cascade under a broad-brimmed hat, and his somber face aglow with genius and cocksureness." The character's face was "hatchet-shaped and not unlike an Aztec's." So was Imber's. He usually carried "a heap of little paper-covered books in one hand, and an extinct cigar in the other." So did Imber. Like Imber he sported a cane, lived in a dark little room, was addicted to "spirituous nightcaps," and expected other people to defray the cost of the nightcaps as well as the rest of his living expenses.

Toward the end of the book, having dispelled any doubt that his "dear friend" had modeled for Pinchas, the author took steps to protect himself and his publisher from libel charges. Another character squelched Pinchas by referring to "our great national Hebrew poet, Naphtali Herz Imber," and proceeded to declaim *Mishmar Hayarden* in Israel Zangwill's translation. (Today the right to quote or translate published poetry is worth money—but the chances are against Imber's having received anything for the advertisement.)

The first encounter with the West had been painful. The thing to do, Imber decided, was to go farther west. In 1892 he embarked for New York, in steerage.

"A QUEER little man that has been seen on the streets for the past few days is a Hebrew poet. Not that he looks like one any more than hundreds of other strange-looking people who come and go out of a big city. His dark skin, his coal-black hair, long, thick and curly, his dark-brown eyes, his straight back, his strong facial bones make him seem a son of Italy rather than Austria, and a Christian rather than a Hebrew. Now he is in distress, as he will tell you. . . ."

The Cincinnati *Times-Star* headlined this story, "The Harp of David in the Hands of a Child of Galicia and of the World." Papers elsewhere ran similar items during Imber's first year in this country. He did not make a secret of his distress. He told reporters about his library, "pawned throughout the state of Illinois." He told them about falling ill in New York and being "excluded from the big Mount Sinai Jewish hospital." He talked bitterly of his arrival in the New World, of being "hailed by the Jewish press as a thinker, poet, and scientist" for a day and then left to his own devices.

His was the disappointment common to all immigrants of minor news value who do not know how to cash in on their fleeting glory. Others have come to resent America for the experience. Imber resented the Jews.

On the Lower East Side—a larger, even more Westernized Whitechapel—he encountered his songs. *Tikvosenu* was chanted by the Eastern European Jews there, to a tune of uncertain origin; they simply called it "The Hope" now, *Hatikvah,* and rarely connected it with the gaunt, poorly dressed newcomer, until he told them. It was a thing to flatter a poet's vanity, an advance payment on immortality as it were. But Imber found that here a claim to immortality would not keep body and soul together. At most, it was

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good for an occasional free drink in one of the *kibitzarnias* on Canal and Grand Streets. As for a livelihood, everyone pointed to another East Side poet, the venerable graybeard Eliakum Zunser: his Yiddish "Return to Zion" rivaled "Hatikvah" in popularity, but he kept a shop just the same. That you could not live on Hebrew poetry was obvious; a healthy man should make a living in business and versify in his spare time.

To Naphtali Herz Imber such sincere advice was worse than Zangwill's mockery. It was like blackmail, like a death threat unless he changed his innermost being. He did not blame the philosophy behind the advice, nor himself for failing to foresee it; he blamed the people who gave him this and no more, except a few drinks. Anyway, he took the drinks. They cushioned the shock. He built a glassy, alcoholic wall around himself to protect the holy land of his spirit from invasion by the Philistines.

He recalled Oliphant's stories of Harris, of the appeal of mysticism to Americans, and tried to open a Cabala class in New York. All he got out of it was the wrath of the rabbinate. He left town and toured the Midwest. Publicity flurries alternated with periods of hunger—and he was not so young as he had been in the Balkans. In Boston, where he wound up late in 1893, he sold articles to the *Jewish Chronicle,* the *Daily Traveler,* and the *Transcript,* and regained his sense of humor. He got even with the New Yorkers by having word of his death sent to the Lower East Side and watching for the obituaries. "Some," he grinned later, "said very good things about me. They thought one should say no evil about the dead. What the truthful ones said I don't care to have reprinted."

In August 1895 a new magazine called *Uriel* went on sale in Boston. It was a monthly devoted to "Cabbalistic Science." A year's subscription was to cost three dollars, a single issue twenty-five cents. Only two issues appeared altogether, and in the first the most remarkable item was an editorial self-portrait:

"Many great men have been punished for attempting to reveal the wisdom of the Cabbala, as our editor, Mr. Naphtali H. Imber whose portrait graces the frontispiece. . . . Mr. Imber's life is a romance of the most romantic type. . . . We recognize in him an offspring of that race to whom the Great Hebrew alluded when he said, 'No prophet is honored by his own people—'" His bad luck, it then appeared, was due to "the frivolous temper of the Hebrews," and to "fanatic rabbis" who had "conspired to slander him, accusing him of becoming a Christian."

He wrote like an anti-Semite but felt slandered by the charge of apostasy. He vilified the Jews but flared up when he heard of anyone else attacking them. In the same year of 1895 he wrote two essays for the American government—"Letters of Rabbi Akiba" and "Education and the Talmud" (published in the 1896 Report of the Federal Bureau of Education)—contending that the rabbinical school system had never been equaled. He felt entitled to denounce the Jews, for like the prophet he chastised flesh of his flesh and spirit of his spirit.

He left Boston when *Uriel* folded, and went west again, this time for years. He rode the rails across the plains and the mountains and along the Pacific Coast, lecturing on mysticism and drinking, posing as "Mahatma Imber" before small-town audiences, and drinking, feuding with Madam Blavatsky, the high priestess of Theosophism, and drinking and writing Hebrew verse.

I tramp a perpetual journey;
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy....

What Walt Whitman said of himself in a metaphysical sense applied to Imber in a physical one; and so did Swinburne's twofold description of Whitman as "a strong-winded soul with prophetic wings" and "a drunken apple-woman reeling in a gutter." The year 1897 found him in California, the frequent guest of a family of literary distinction and of Russian Jewish origin, Strunsky by name, whose young daughters were deeply impressed by his wit and his consumption of whisky: at dinner, having emptied his glass

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and believing himself unobserved, he would pour a pint of whisky into his soup.

In 1898 he was in and around the Territories of New Mexico and Arizona. In Switzerland, six thousand miles away, the First World Zionist Congress launched the struggle for the Jewish state. At the close of the sessions all the delegates rose and sang "Hatikvah." The official record does not show that the author was mentioned.

In 1900 he was in Denver, Chicago, and other places. In Chicago, at the age of forty-four, he married a lady named Dr. Amanda Katie Davidson. She may have been as much a doctor as Imber was a mahatma. According to Zangwill she was "an American Christian crank." According to Imber's brother she was "like Ruth," adopted Judaism, and corresponded as faithfully as any Jewish daughter with her loving mother-in-law in Zloczov. According to Albert Parry, thus far the only chronicler of the American *Bohème*, "there was no doubt that she and Imber enjoyed themselves hugely traveling together in the obscure American provinces of the mauve decade with their stock of lectures on occultism." Twelve months later, at all events, this lady had gone out of Imber's life, never to reappear, and her only memento was the dedication of twelve Hebrew poems: "*La Sulamith*—for Dr. Amanda Katie Imber."

THE poems for Amanda-Sulamith, together with some twenty others of American origin, appeared in 1902 in the second volume of Imber's verse, but not in this country. *Barkai he-Hadash* ("The New Morning Star") was published in Zloczov by his brothers. It was an unlucky venture; a fire destroyed nearly the whole edition as it came off the press.

Imber was then slowly tramping back east across the continent. He lived without visible means of support, sighed, "A good steak is better than a gilded epitaph," and turned out new poems. Their date-lines marked a meandering trail to the Lower East Side: Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Rosenhayn and Woodbine in South Jersey—sites of a Jewish agricultural settlement founded by Baron de Hirsch. In Chicago he wrote a plaintive "Prayer to the Tailor." In St. Louis he wrote "My Confession" as he was about to be operated on for blood poisoning; it began:

Before me at the green table
The gamblers hullo aloud. . . .

and ended as follows:

I cry like an erring child
From Father's house driven—
And thou, Priest good and mild,
Speak out the word: "Forgiven."

The English was Imber's. He had begun to translate his own verse into the last language of the six or seven he had mastered, and the only one, other than Hebrew, in which he wrote. Nothing delighted him more than to be complimented on his Hebrew and to answer, "You mean my English, don't you?"

These latest poems were different. Their themes were personal, their sarcasms gentler; there were lyrically introspective moods. Then suddenly an event rekindled Imber's fire. Nineteen hundred and three, the date of the Kishinev pogrom, cut through his next book like a caesura and lent an almost casual air to everything previous. Gone were the carping, self-pitying attitudes, the semi-anti-Semitic poses. A Jew indicted barbarism and forecast divine vengeance in "To Ivan the Terrible" (first printed in the *Jewish World* of June 4, 1903): "Japan and China will draw their swords against thee—" And when the Russo-Japanese War broke out a year later, the rejoicing prophet called his forthcoming volume *Barkai ha-Shelishi:* "The Avenging Morning Star," and dedicated it to the Emperor Mitsuhito.

THE dedication of the third *Barkai* (New York, 1904) also revealed a turn in Imber's affairs. It was signed, "Your Majesty's faithful servant Naphtali Herz Imber, care of Judge Mayer Sulzberger, Philadelphia, Pa." At last he had found a Maecenas.

"My dear Benefactor and Patron," he pref-

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aced his next work: "I have succeeded in capturing the beautiful *bulbul* which trilled out the sweetest songs in the Plains of Shiraz. I bring that songbird, known as Omar, to Your Honor in a Hebrew cage. . . ."

The Hebrew version of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was published in 1905, financed by George Alexander Kohut, an eminent philanthropist, and somewhat superciliously introduced by a noted scholar, Joseph Jacobs. Any object of Judge Sulzberger's interest rose rapidly in the esteem of the Jewish-minded elite. The president of the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas was a dominant, sarcastic man of profound erudition, able to appreciate Imber's learning, enjoying his impudent wit, and for a time broadminded enough to take him as he was. To suggestions that he reform his protégé, the jurist used to reply, "Then he would no longer be Imber."

It could not last. Sulzberger was not amused when his court jester spent his allowance for one month on a glorious fiftieth birthday party for himself, inviting the whole Lower East Side. He cut the wastrel off with a dollar a day and named the head of the New York Public Library's Jewish Division, Abraham Freidus, as custodian. Freidus was another original; he made Imber come to the library for his daily dollar and search for it between the pages of a book—the idea being to force intellectual nourishment on him while he was still sober. For the initiated it used to be fun to watch Imber trying to charm an advance out of Freidus. Rebekah Kohut, George Kohut's mother and an international Jewish women's leader in her own right, noted admiringly that Imber "could move Sulzberger to howling mirth and towering rage, but he couldn't budge Freidus."

It was the same on the Lower East Side. The little people took their cues from the great; they made him a comic figure even in the *kibitzarnias*. Like a good trouper, Imber played his part to the hilt. He lived at 113 Forsyth Street in a dark, dirty little room where he had to burn candles at noon to read his own writing; but evenings, on his round of the cafés, the gaunt, shabby derelict would pay for his liquor in verses improvised on demand, in sardonic humor and paradoxical brilliance, until they carried him home.

In 1907 Zangwill had another go at him. If possible, *The Jewish Hamlet* was even more unkind than *Children of the Ghetto*, but afterwards Zangwill graciously credited his old friend with "the virtues as well as the faults of a typical Bohemian." This discovery promptly resolved all difficulties of classification and conscience. Everyone knows that bohemians abhor the conventional security of the bourgeois. Rebekah Kohut even made Imber "a born bohemian." Albert Parry elected him "King of the Jewish *Bohème*" and gently mocked his "magnificent, homage-inviting appearances" at Zionist meetings, to collect drinks for his old hymn.

One may wonder how a writer of today would feel, seeing one of his works reprinted time after time, with copies sold and given away by the thousands and royalties confined to drinks; but of course the writers of today are not "born bohemians." Imber, one of the few times he fell out of his new character, asked just one question: "Many people enjoy my 'Hatikvah,' many booksellers got rich on it—and what do I have after fifty years of work?"

"I'm the originator of the Zionist movement," he told a reporter who interviewed him at the Café Royal. "I started it; now I'll let others carry on and get the glory." The interviewer, Hutchins Hapgood, was to become one of America's great liberal figures; at the time he was writing a series of East Side profiles for the *Commercial Advertiser* (later published in book form with drawings by an obscure Lower East Side boy named Jacob Epstein). Hapgood found Imber "difficult to take seriously." He perceived "many of the more humorous and less impressive peculiarities of the character in Zangwill's book." Thirty years later he still recalled "both a Voltairean and a comic character—as critical as the great French writer and more cynical, and in a way also an amusing clown—"

Imber said, "If you wish to know the spirit

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and purpose of my Hebrew poems, I'll tell you. For two thousand years Hebrew poetry has been nothing but lamentations. There've been no love songs, no wine songs, no songs of joy—nothing pagan. There've been no poets, only critics in rhyme. Now what I did in my Hebrew verses was to do away with lamentations. . . . My theme, indeed, is Zion. I'm an individualist. It's the only 'ism' I believe in, and I want my nation to be individual, too. I want them to be joyously themselves, and so I'm a Zionist."

He said, "I've now perfected Zionism, so I'm free to pass to mysticism, on which I'm deeply at work. It is difficult to persuade Americans to become mystics; their philosophy is what I call Barnumism. . . . Psychology is the only science. I've written on everything, and I know almost nothing about the subjects on which I write. Much of my work is satirical. I've published many articles satirizing the rabbis, who consequently hate me. I call them 'silk-chimney rabbis.' I don't think they will say *kaddish* for my soul when I'm dead. And yet I'm no skeptic exactly. . . ."

The clown was thinking of death. "Wine they give me, but they wouldn't give me a burial," he complained to an undertaker friend when he was close to fifty. The friend, User Marcus, promised to bury him in exchange for a poem. The contract was sent to Judge Sulzberger to be made legal, and the stanzas of "A Grave as a Cure for Sickness" fulfilled Imber's part of the bargain.

The pauper made his will. These were the main provisions: "To the rabbis I leave what I don't know—it will help them to a longer life. To my enemies I leave my rheumatism. To the Jewish editors I leave my broken pen, so that they can write slowly and avoid mistakes."

He deteriorated almost hourly. His appearance became pathetic, his face deeply lined, his mottled hair uncut, his clothing in a disgraceful state of disrepair. Only the sad eyes and the mocking, sardonic smile remained of the old Imber. Respectable Jewish figures shunned the exponent of a most "un-Jewish" vice, and the few who sympathized with him ransacked the history of literature for comparable cases. Zangwill and Rebekah Kohut agreed on François Villon. Someone else detected a resemblance to Edgar Allan Poe and hastened to tell Imber. Imber glanced up from his glass, chuckled—"What—this drinker?"—and withdrew again into his alcoholic seclusion, behind the wall that shielded what was still his own.

His pockets continued to bulge with scraps of paper full of Hebrew script. It became a standard joke that he was carrying his life's work with him. The joke came closer to the truth than the jokers knew; posthumously issued under the title *Treasures of Two Worlds; Unpublished Legends and Traditions of the Jewish Nation*, the scribblings of Imber's years of decay surprised the experts. They contained a wealth of half-mystical, half-scientific material on the Bible as fact, on its understanding through music, on Moses as the discoverer of electricity and Solomon as the inventor of the telephone—on scores of ideas which we connect today with such names as Velikovsky and Silvio Gesell.

In mid-September 1909 he finished a Hebrew poem on the Hudson-Fulton celebration just before being taken to Mount Moriah Hospital on East 2nd Street, with "a complication of diseases." He remained in the hospital long enough to compose a facetious death notice in Yiddish verse for the *Kibitzer*, the humorous journal of the Lower East Side. Then—"under the charm of the mild autumn weather," as a New York *Times* reporter put it—he "left and wandered to all his old-time haunts." Next morning he was found unconscious in Forsyth Street by Bernard Semel, the president of the hospital, and again removed there. He had suffered a stroke of paralysis, and in the evening of October 7 the *Times* learned that his death was only a matter of hours. He died at dawn.

October 8 was the day of Simchas Torah, and the *Kibitzer* ran Imber's death notice under a drawing of a bottle, with the caption, "On Simchas Torah all *shikorim* are sober."

AFTER the tragedy came the farce.

First the Rivington Street congregation ruled out funeral services in its synagogue

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because Imber had not been a religious man. That did it.

Never in the annals of the Lower East Side had there been such breast beating and righteous indignation. Communal rivalries flared up over the corpse: when it turned out that User Marcus's burial plot was located in the Rumanian Jewish cemetery at Bayside, the Galician Jews "violently" insisted on the right to bury their countryman. Marcus had to waive his exclusive privilege. At the bier in the Attorney Street synagogue, three different rabbis scathingly denounced the zealots of Rivington Street: "Good, kind, noble Imber was infinitely a holier, better, and more godly man than ever a synagogue congregation was," Rabbi Joseph Scheff cried amid tremendous applause. Rabbi Scheff orated in Yiddish, Rabbi Magnes of Temple Emanu-El in English, Rabbi Buechner in German. There was no eulogy in Hebrew for the Hebrew poet. Among the notables absent from his funeral was Judge Mayer Sulzberger.

As the coffin was carried out of the hall, all the mourners rose and intoned "Hatikvah." Streets around the Educational Alliance building were black with crowds waiting for the procession to start; the turnout was estimated at ten thousand, and two hundred police were on hand to keep order. The cortège moved slowly, escorted by the strains of "Hatikvah." Placed at the head of the grave was a tablet with its text.

THE obituaries agreed that Imber, despite undeniable minor failings, had been a genius and would never be forgotten.

Only one paper, the Yiddish *Zukunft*, struck a different note. What it had to say (allowing for the inadequacy of the English language in conveying Yiddish feeling) was this:

"Poor Imber, you were no friend of the quick lunch and rapid transit. They were all so ignorant of him. He had deep contempt in his wise eyes for many of his fellow men. The collar on his neck was dirty. There was an odor of cheap tobacco about him. Ragged and hungry, he went around among those who keep washing themselves all the time, no matter how much dirt there may be in their hearts. But they wrote no love songs. He had no roof over his head, no one shed a tear of pity for him, he had no place on earth, least of all in New York. And yet he told them everything to their faces—he who had no money.

"He was a modern Diogenes and would have slept in a barrel if it hadn't been for our strict police. Like Diogenes he looked for human beings with a lantern and asked nothing of the high and mighty but that they shouldn't stand between him and the sun.

"He was a cynic. His Zionism went hand in hand with cynicism, as, for him, the incense of *Kashrut* with the smell of cheap liquor. But he was a free man, an independent spirit, a man with backbone. The poet of 'Hatikvah,' who loved a Christian woman.

"He didn't care about kosher and *treife;* he despised tyranny in his innermost soul and always fought it, even in literature. He took what he could get. But he didn't beg. He said, 'Give me, you dog,' and he did not say, 'Thank you.' The ghetto explorer Zangwill made a King of Shnorrers of him. But he didn't *shnorr,* Mr. Zangwill. He took wherever he could, but he didn't wag his tail, Mr. Zangwill.

"He's better off dead.

"For under his dirty clothes was a sensitive heart—and now that ten thousand have come to his funeral, now he is suddenly a singer, a sage, and the ones who used to squirt poisoned filth at him, who abused and bespattered him, are now running to praise him! All of a sudden they have changed their practice and sing paeans—to the dead man!

"Dear Imber, I don't bemoan you. You could never have lived to see that. You're better off dead."

The idea would have amused Imber. So would the "Hebrew folk songs" of today. He had no taste for paeans over his tomb, but he would have prided himself on the supreme achievement of a poet: to live by his works alone.

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ISRAEL'S ZEALOTS IN GABERDINE

The "Guardians of the City"

ALFRED WERNER

NOT long ago the head of the Biological Institute on Mount Carmel in Israel received letters warning him to remove its collection of "unclean" animals that were being kept for experimental purposes: "Unless you do so we shall destroy them. Even the help of the police will be of no avail to you, and we pity the victims on both sides. If there has been no previous activity in Haifa, know that this will be our first action." Threatening letters were also received by a socialist paper in Tel Aviv: "He who desecrates the Sabbath," they read, "will fall under the death sentence." The text left no doubt that the desecration of the Sabbath included switching on electric lights and listening to the radio.

These were only a few among a swarm of similar letters that have been sent to both individuals and groups since the establishment of the State of Israel. No Israeli can be sure that he will be spared; for even the old and venerable Isaac Halevi Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Israel, received one of these communications denouncing him as a sinner and traitor, a "paid puppet of the so-called State of Israel," threatening him with bodily harm.

The letters were all signed *Neturei Karta,* which means in Aramaic "Guardians of the City." These religious fanatics, who shrink from nothing in their endeavor to push Jewry back to the Dark Ages, have achieved a certain notoriety even outside the Holy Land. Yet little correct information about this group can be found either in Jewish or Gentile circles in this country. The average American tourist, who casts a shy and puzzled glance upon whatever living vestiges of the past he may come across in Israel, especially in Jerusalem, finds it hard to believe that these venerable men could ever resort to violence and illegal action. Of course, the historian who recalls how young and old fanatics strode over the prostrate body of Uriel Acosta and how assassins were sent against Spinoza, may recognize that bigotry knows boundaries of neither creed nor race. But these pious Jews of Jerusalem, Safed, and B'nei B'raq, in their fur caps or broad-brimmed black felt hats and long black gaberdines, with their earlocks hanging down to their shoulders, look gentle enough, and they seem too busy poring over their ancient books to harbor thoughts of violence.

THE Neturei Karta constitute only a small percentage of the Orthodox Jews in Israel. In view of the countless variations of Jewish religious belief, it is almost impossible to estimate the number of Israelis who would qualify as Orthodox according to American standards. Early in 1949 the Religious Bloc—including both the Zionist Mizrachi and the anti-Zionist Agudat Israel, with their affiliated workers' parties—polled over 50,000 votes or slightly more than 12 per cent of the total cast. Even today, with the recent mass influx of Yemenites and Eastern Europeans, they would scarcely poll more than 20 per cent of the total.

The actual number of the Neturei Karta is a well-guarded secret. In January 1950, when

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ONE of the more spectacular aspects of life in Israel has been the emergence of a fanatical, ultra-Orthodox group calling itself the Neturei Karta—"Guardians of the City." Its members have engaged in insulting and even violent behavior against non-observers of the Sabbath, have tried forcibly to close cafés and theaters, and have entered into political negotiations with those hostile to the existence of the new state. These "Guardians" have so far been less a threat than a nuisance, but, according to ALFRED WERNER, who visited Israel this past summer, they do represent in embryo a menace to Israel's developing democracy. Dr. Werner has written on Jewish matters for this magazine and many other periodicals.

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they sent a cable to the Pope thanking him for his efforts to internationalize Jerusalem, they claimed to speak on behalf of 40,000 Jews of Jerusalem. On other occasions they have claimed only 5,000 adherents. "Godless" Zionist cynics believe that their actual number is closer to 500.

Be that as it may, the Neturei Karta are a far from negligible factor in Israeli public life, forming as they do a spearhead of forces of reaction greater than themselves. The Religious Bloc may repudiate the Neturei Karta today, yet it may use them tomorrow, secretely, to put pressure on the socialists. Once the Orthodox wing in Israel feels ready for a break with the socialists and a "cultural" showdown, the Neturei Karta may be assigned a much greater role.

THE Neturei Karta themselves display a megalomania that is blind to the insignificance of their numbers, and which is expressed by the Aramaic name they adopted. It goes back to an old legend, according to which a visitor, arriving in a town, asked the people: "Where are the *neturei karta,* the guardians of the city?" Shown the gendarmes, the police, the soldiers, he shook his head, saying: "No, these are the wreckers of the city, the guardians of the city are they who study Torah and observe the commandments." Today the Neturei Karta regard the Haganah men who fought the Arabs as the "wreckers of Israel."

Fond of historical analogies as they are, the Neturei Karta wish to be regarded as the contemporary incarnation of the ancient Pharisees, the opponents of today's Sadducees, namely, the Zionists. But the analogy is far from consistent. R. Travers Herford says that the Sadducees were "guardians and adherents of the ancient order, the time-honored custom, the proscriptive rights," while the Pharisees appeared as "annoying innovators." The Pharisees were "revolutionaries" who extended the scope of religious life by adding the Oral Tradition to the written Torah; they were also "nationalists" who stubbornly refused to compromise with the Romans. The Neturei Karta are, in the last analysis, both traitorous (sincere traitors, probably) and reactionary. They demand that a million modern Israelis submit themselves undeviatingly to the letter, not the spirit, of the Law; and in the year of decision, 1948, they adopted an attitude towards the embattled republic of Israel that can at best be called defeatist.

The Neturei Karta represent that part of the old pre-Zionist Yishuv which is fiercely antagonistic to the new Zionist generations. They are the descendants of those pious Jews who, towards the end of the 18th century and up to the middle of the 19th, flocked into the Holy Land from Poland, Rumania, Russia, Galicia, and Slovakia (then part of Hungary) in order to devote themselves to a life of religious study. The majority settled in Jerusalem, where they established many Yeshivas supported by *halukah,* that is, funds collected abroad for the upkeep of the learned Jews in Palestine. While well versed in the Hebrew and the Aramaic of the past, they spoke Yiddish in daily intercourse among themselves, holding that the *loshen kodesh,* the holy Hebrew language, must not be profaned by secular use. Today their offspring remain a Yiddish-speaking enclave within a large Hebrew-speaking community.

The forefathers of the present Neturei Karta stubbornly opposed all reforms and innovations. When, during the middle of the last century, Sir Moses Montefiore virtually begged the Jews of Jerusalem to leave their unhygienic, primitive, and cramped quarters to settle in the new dwellings he had built for them outside the 16th-century walls of the city, a majority refused his invitation. It took the war of 1948 to make their grandchildren flee the slums of the Old City to the Israeli-held New City of Jerusalem. Yet even there they sought shelter in a slum section—unlovely Mea Shearim—making it within a short time a citadel of religious reaction.

THE fight between the old Yishuv and the new is in a measure reflected in the struggle between two highly religious men, Rabbi Hayim Sonnenfeld and Rabbi Abra-

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ham Isaac Kook. The former, who is revered by the Neturei Karta almost as a saint, was born in Slovakia in 1849 and went to Palestine as a young man. There he made it his life's purpose to keep all modern progress and science out of the Holy Land. When the Alliance Israélite Universelle established its schools in Jerusalem, Sonnenfeld issued a ban against all who sent their children to these institutions where they might learn foreign languages and other secular subjects; this ban had very practical consequences, for the ostracized person was automatically excluded from the benefits of *halukah* funds. Later on, when the first Zionists—most of them educated people versed in Western culture—arrived to turn the desert into a garden, they became the chief target of Sonnenfeld's wrath: he considered the *halutzim* so deeply sunk in sin as to be beyond redemption.

Kook, who was fifteen years younger than Sonnenfeld, became rabbi of Jaffa in 1903, heartily embraced Zionism, and, though profoundly Orthodox, welcomed everything he thought good and healthy in Western civilization. After World War I when he became Chief Rabbi of Palestine, he enjoyed the respect of both pious Talmudic scholars and "irreligious Marxists." He loved the hard-working *halutzim* as much as he loved the Talmudists. The *halutzim,* he said, redeemed themselves by the performance of *mitzvat avoda,* the good deed of work.

In urging his followers to boycott Chief Rabbi Kook and everything he stood for, the fanatical Rabbi Sonnenfeld prepared the ground for the Neturei Karta. He grimly opposed the participation of women in the communal elections; he fought the Zionist demand that Hebrew be made the language of instruction, and that a minimum of secular education be included in the religious schools; and he urged his followers to avoid any contamination by the Zionist "freethinkers." When he died, well over eighty years old, he was saddened by the realization that he and his disciples had failed to thwart the Zionists' efforts.

Dissension had come to split the Orthodox camp. There was still the Agudat Israel, which feared that Zionism would deprive the Jewish people of its unique nature. But there was also a new organization, Mizrachi, which, while it wanted the prospective Jewish state to be based on traditional Judaism, ardently strove for the achievement of the Zionist goal as laid down at the first Basel Congress. Rabbi Kook, who survived Rabbi Sonnenfeld by a few years, tried hard to reconcile the two factions, but earned little thanks from Agudat. Some of the hotheads of Agudat's youth organization, Zeire Agudat Israel, led by a certain Amram Blau, went to scandalous lengths to express their hostility towards him. For he was doubly uncomfortable to them since he combined tolerance towards the *halutzim* with unequaled religious learning. Once they staged a Purim play in which Kook was sentenced to death four times (according to Jewish law a man can be put to death in four different ways: by stoning, burning, decapitation, or strangulation). On another occasion they emptied a pail of dirty water on the old gentleman as he passed by one of their Yeshivas in the Old City. Kook had shortly before urged the Orthodox groups to participate in the 19th World Zionist Congress, asking: "How can one not be a Zionist, seeing that the Lord God has chosen Zion?" When he died in 1935 he was mourned by the entire nation, except Blau and his friends, who on the day of his death organized a feast, serving free drinks at their synagogue after evening prayers.

A YEAR later the twenty or so students around Blau managed to get themselves expelled from Agudat. It was only in 1941, however, that, having grown in numbers, they decided to give their group a name—Neturei Karta, which had first been used as the name of an innocuous cooperative for the distribution of strictly kosher food. Little was heard of the Neturei Karta outside Palestine before 1948, though they were busy publishing Yiddish magazines and vilifying the Zionist leaders as well as the new Chief Rabbi, Dr. Herzog. They came into prom-

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inence only in 1948, the year that marked what they considered a catastrophe because it saw the establishment of the Jewish state.

It was a catastrophe to them for several reasons. Under the British Mandate they enjoyed complete autonomy; now they would have to submit to government by men almost as hateful to them as Petlura or Hitler. In addition they had to abandon their splendid isolation in the Old City when it fell to the Arab Legion on May 28, 1948. It has been charged repeatedly that the Neturei Karta indulged in such treasonable acts as hoisting a white flag while the fighting was still on and maintaining secret relations with the enemy. In general, however, the Orthodox group as a whole fought as gallantly as any other Israelis. (True, a few Orthodox rabbis refused at first to let Haganah draft their Yeshiva students, and yielded only after Haganah had threatened to arrest the boys as shirkers. Before this, though, many Orthodox youngsters had defied their rabbis by donning the Haganah uniform of their own accord.)

Neturei Karta's first act after being evacuated to the New City was to march to the Jewish Agency and demand that the fighting be stopped and peace be made with the Arabs at once. Then they declared Independence Day a day of mourning and fasting, and became the only Jews in Israel who continued to say on Passover: "This year we are slaves, next year we shall be free men."

WHILE the Neturei Karta never lose an opportunity to malign and embarrass the Ben Gurion regime, they make the fullest use of all the freedom afforded them by Israel's democracy. But whatever they do, Blau and his friends seem always to be treated with kid gloves. In order to appreciate fully the patience of the Israeli government with these religious rebels, one need only chronicle the highlights of their record since 1948. They have firmly entrenched themselves on an island of their own, a kind of medieval state within liberal 20th-century Israel, which is the aforementioned Mea Shearim district in Jerusalem's New City, a neighborhood that seems to have as many synagogues as Rome has churches. Built up some seventy-odd years ago, this quarter was, according to popular tradition, surrounded by a wall with one hundred gates (in Hebrew: *mea shearim*). Today it has been replaced by an invisible wall behind which a regime of terror is installed. Though practically all of the residents of Mea Shearim are strictly religious, not all are fanatics. Stones were thrown by the Neturei Karta into those houses in which, on Independence Day, radios played the march music broadcast over the Israeli station. When someone dared to raise the Israeli flag over one of the local synagogues, Neturei Karta men hauled it down and raised the Union Jack in its stead. Several attempts were also made to burn down a local bookstore selling publications of which they did not approve.

One of the shortest roads from the northwestern part of the New City to the Mandelbaum Gate, the only entrance to Jordan-held territory, leads through Mea Shearim; but the Neturei Karta have caused all cars, whether driven by Israelis or Christians, to detour around the section in order to avoid unpleasant incidents. This victory has made them bold, and they now try to terrorize the surrounding neighborhoods as well. The woman tourist who approaches this quarter in a short-sleeved modern dress will hear the most unflattering remarks. Men who go without hats or smoke cigarettes on the Sabbath cannot pass through this section without being insulted or having stones thrown at them.

Rehov Geula (Geula Road) only skirts Mea Shearim, yet the Orthodox stalwarts erected road blocks there to stop Sabbath traffic, and Israeli soldiers have had the task of removing them under a hail of stones and bottles. Most of the Sabbath traffic to and fro involves officials of the United Nations busy with Jordan-Israel frontier problems, the exchange of prisoners, and other matters; diplomats of various countries; and Israeli soldiers. Yet the Neturei Karta men have indiscriminately smashed the windows of diplomats' cars, torn down their flags, and pelted soldiers with all sorts of missiles. One

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can see old bearded scholars supervising young scholars in these frays, which violate the Sabbath and a dozen other commandments and prohibitions as well. But the Neturei Karta seem to feel convinced that in their battle with the godless every rule can be broken. Even the fair sex is not absent from the scene: from balconies and doorways "pious" women watch the fight and cheer their menfolk on.

THE Israeli police have been unbelievably patient in the face of all this, using persuasion rather than force. At worst, they have turned the water hose on the zealots. After complaints had been lodged by several consulates, Daniel Auster, mayor of Jerusalem, issued a stern warning against any further interference with diplomatic cars. Yet, though the Neturei Karta have brazenly ignored it, the police still do not make use of real force against them. Despite this, Neturei Karta has distributed cartoons showing bearded rabbis being assaulted by policemen.

In the fall of 1949, when Jerusalem had its traditional Succoth festivals, a Biblical ballet performance was given in the main public gardens of the city, followed by open dancing in which hundreds of young people took part. Enraged by these acts of "immorality," Amram Blau urged his followers to carry on a "holy war to the last drop of your blood" against the desecration of Judaism by public dances and "lewd" performances. About two hundred gaberdined rowdies marched to the park where the dances were taking place, began a riot, and met the policemen sent to disperse them with a hail of stones, bricks, and bottles. After an hour's fight, during which the Neturei Karta also resorted to clubs and iron bars, injuring many policemen, the demonstrators were forced back into Mea Shearim. Amram Blau and six others were arrested for disturbing the peace. They were defiant when they arrived at the prison holding their citrons and palm branches and at their insistence a *succah* was built in prison so they could fulfill the requirement of eating in the Tabernacle. Since there were only seven of them, and ten persons are required for the *minyan,* they were joined each morning by three policemen.

APPARENTLY the Neturei Karta look upon these concessions as proof of their own power rather than as gestures of mercy on the part of the government. Could a secular, "atheist" state like Israel be anything but feeble and unsure? Bluntly speaking, they do not recognize the State of Israel because, for one thing, its genesis contradicts all traditional prophecies. Mizrachi and Agudat would be pleased with the state if only it adopted the religious law in its entirety as its own, but the Neturei Karta go a long way further: "We are against the Jewish state even if all Jews were to keep the religious laws and even if the Law were declared the official law of the state."

Neturei Karta would recognize a Jewish state only if it were literally created by the Messiah—the Messiah as a great warrior who would defeat the enemies of Israel, rebuild the Temple, and feed the righteous with the flesh of Leviathan. But how could the Messiah ever come to a country whose men shave their faces and whose girls work in the fields in shorts, and where even Talmudists are subjected to heathen legislation? And as long as Israel is a secular republic like other unholy states instead of *malchut Shaddai,* the Kingdom of God, Neturei Karta will disobey its laws.

They do not participate in municipal elections. They advise their young men to dodge military service, and Amram Blau urged the Orthodox girls to commit suicide rather than allow themselves to be conscripted. Their members refuse to comply with the law requiring the general registration of children, even though the government agreed to consider children registered in their *chedarim* as enrolled in approved schools. At a recent national conference they passed a rule prohibiting their members from reading any but their own publications, and from listening to the Israel radio. On the other hand they have not quite abandoned their idea of redeeming the godless ones—by force, if necessary.

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When they consider a movie objectionable, they try to prevent people from buying tickets at the box office. Shocked by the bare legs on the movie posters advertising *Red Shoes,* they covered the offending limbs with tar. They throw smoke bombs into stores and set fire to cafés that remain open on Saturdays.

WHO are the "generals" that lead this war of nerves against a whole population, the vast majority of which believes in a strict separation of church and state? Who are the self-styled prophets who term Zionism "a betrayal of Judaism" and characterize the present Israeli government as "the worst disaster that has befallen the Jews since the destruction of the Second Temple"?

The most widely known of their leaders is Amram Blau. Jerusalem-born, he is about fifty, married, and owns a substantial amount of real estate. The fact that some of his business partners are Arabs may throw light on his stand during the war of 1948. Blau was arrested by the Israeli government on several occasions: he has never concealed his desire and hope that the present State of Israel would collapse and the country be taken over temporarily by King Abdullah. After the foundation of Israel, Blau requested Monsignor Thomas J. McMahon of New York, president of the new Pontifical Mission for Palestine, to "sound out" Arab authorities on having all the Neturei Karta transferred to Jordan's jurisdiction.

His closest aides are the brothers Aaron and Moshe Katzenellenbogen; the former, the "minister of finance," collects the funds coming in from London and New York that are destined for the upkeep of the ultra-Orthodox Yeshivas and for whatever other expenses accrue. Moshe is in charge of public relations—that is to say, he welcomes every opportunity to enlighten non-Jewish journalists on the depravity and wickedness of the Zionists. Blau's "foreign minister," Yeshayah Schoenberger, who edits some of the sect's magazines, was sentenced to six months in jail for contempt of court, and freed only on the intervention of the Orthodox members of Ben Gurion's cabinet. Last September Blau and Schoenberger flew to London, entrusted with the mission of collecting funds for one of their religious institutions. To British newsmen they complained about the anti-religious character of Israel: "The new law according to which girls must not marry before having reached the age of seventeen is completely contrary to Torah . . . . Yemenite children who arrived in the country full of messianic fervor were taken away and transformed into *goyim*. . . ."

The group's ideologist is old Rabbi Eliahu Porush, a man with a well-rounded secular education; in his youth he wrote a book on viticulture, with a preface by Kook, then rabbi of Jaffa (a mistake for which some of the Neturei Karta still cannot quite forgive him). Porush is the composer of many anti-Zionist songs, one of which has the words: "The Lord is our creator, we are his servants, and we shall never recognize the Zionist government."

If Neturei Karta confined its activities to Israel proper, it would be troublesome enough. Unfortunately, it tries also to enlist the help of Gentile statesmen, of the Pope, and of the United Nations. Thus it sent a memorandum to the United Nations, saying that it was opposed to "Zionist political domination of the Holy Land," demanding that its members be given international passports, and that the UN appoint one or several "responsible persons among UN members to secure and protect the rights and interests" of Orthodox Jewry in Jerusalem. They also asked for the transformation of Jerusalem into a city where Orthodox Jews "could live freely and independently."

Both the Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Israel have rejected the UN decision to turn Jerusalem into an international area under the administration of the UN, yet the Neturei Karta contends that the Decree of Internationalization remains valid. Last summer the organization appealed to the UN to make the Israeli government stop recruiting members of the Neturei Karta into the Israeli army on the ground that Jerusalem was not an Israeli city; they even threatened to hale the Israeli government before the Inter-

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national Court of Justice at The Hague on this issue.

The *cause célèbre* involving the drafting of Jerusalemites into the Israeli army was that of Loebele Arieh Weissfisch, erstwhile "foreign-press-relations officer" of Neturei Karta. As early as 1939 he wrote, in the name of his group, to the Moslem delegation in London that "Jews are agreed with the White Paper" (which stopped Jewish immigration to Palestine). In 1948 this young man evaded the draft, was apprehended and brought into court. There he displayed the utmost arrogance, declaring: "The police had no right to arrest me in internationalized Jerusalem." He insisted on answering the judge's questions in Yiddish rather than Hebrew. During his trial his supporters, who packed the courtroom, sang psalms and party songs. The presiding magistrate patiently explained to the defendant that Jewish law did not ban war as such, and that the Bible justified wars of liberation. Weissfisch insisted that the whole trial was conducted in an irregular manner, and demanded a new one. Released on bail, he disappeared.

He later turned up in the Arab-held Old City of Jerusalem. One can imagine how happily Azmi Nashashibi, chairman of the Jordan delegation to the Mixed Armistice Commission, read at a press conference Weissfisch's declaration that he could not live in the New City because of anti-religious persecution, but would wait until the capital was liberated from the "barbaric powers."

Undisturbed by the wrath of the average Israeli, the Neturei Karta held a conference to discuss the question of sending food packages to Weissfisch; they finally decided against it, on the assumption that he would be treated well. Didn't he now live in the "real Eretz Israel," and wouldn't it be the best thing if all the Neturei Karta emigrated too? It should be noted that many of their adult members grew up among Arabs, speak Arabic fluently, and in their cultural pattern —that is, the relegation of women to an inferior status, and their primitive habits of living—resemble Levantines far more than they do the college graduates of the Jewish Agency. They have even had contacts with Haj Amin el Husseini, the notorious ex-Mufti of Jerusalem and Nazi collaborator, and they were deeply disappointed to learn that Abdullah was not prepared to have them in his part of Jerusalem even if the Israeli government consented to let them go.

YET despite all this, the Neturei Karta act in good faith, honestly preferring the old *halukah* system and the feudal order of the Ottoman Empire to both the socialism and capitalism that were imported into the Holy Land by the Zionists. Their sincerity does not, however, make them any the less dangerous. They are a stick with which reaction can strike at the socialists—when it chooses to. Though it may be true that they are a collection of crackpots "out of step with everyone but God," their utterances will be quoted abroad whenever Israel becomes the target of a new anti-progressive crusade.

It is true that the average Israeli, plagued by problems of food and clothing, does not devote much thought to the Neturei Karta or similar fanatics. Responsible political leaders, however, have begun to see in the sect the symptoms of a sickness that may have very serious consequences. Israel cannot afford a *Kulturkampf*. A religious rift at the present time may endanger the very foundations of the state. Yet the lenient attitude towards all religious extremists displayed until now by Ben Gurion's Mapai might change, should the Orthodox factions continue to insist that the whole people of Israel conduct their lives according to notions imposed by a minority. The people who fled from the Inquisition, from czarist oppression, and from Hitlerism, cannot allow their republic to become a clerical state in which freedom of conscience is banned and with it the freedom of the individual to worship or not to worship. Neturei Karta may be a very small group, but its very existence should be a warning to the other Orthodox groups that until they concede more freedom to their fellow Israelis, the threat of a fratricidal religious struggle will continue to hang over Israel.

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PARTY

A Story

MAY NATALIE TABAK

HERBERT SAND set the last of the breakfast dishes away in the cupboard, hung the towels up to dry, turned to his wife Katy and said, "I guess that's all now. I'd better get to work, don't you think?"

His wife was too engrossed in what she was writing to hear him and he decided to go to his study and try to finish that translation before the mail went off. He paused at the door to add hesitantly, "If you need me, be sure to call."

Again he got no reply, and he watched her for a moment before he left. Sitting on that high stool with her legs awkwardly entwined among its rungs, her shoulders hunched over, her head tilted close to the paper, her elbows dug into the table and her pencil tightly clutched in her left hand, she seemed like an earnest child clumsily trying to copy her letters. Without actually thinking about it, he recalled the dash with which she sat at a typewriter working at those trivial sophisticated novels of hers which sold so very well. There was no ease in her body now. How badly she wanted the party that afternoon to be a success, he thought with sudden sympathy. Unless every detail of the preparation was listed, she had convinced herself, something important would be forgotten and the whole thing would be a dismal failure.

At last she straightened up, lighted a cigarette, patted the list as if it were a good dog, and said, "There. That's done. I'll start with the living room." Now it was she who received no reply, and, startled, she glanced at the sink, seeking Herbert where she had left him. She was alone.

The cleanliness of the kitchen mocked her. She looked back at the list with morbid satisfaction. "No one will come," she decided. "I'll go through all this fuss and they'll find all sorts of excuses not to come."

Just then the telephone rang. So. It was beginning already. The big kitchen clock said ten-forty. They had started calling with their apologies as early as they decently could. The pigs. The awful pigs. "I won't answer it," she resolved. "If they can't tell me they're not coming, then they'll have to come. That's all."

The telephone continued to ring. Well, let it. Why answer and make things easy for them. Let them feel uneasy. But—the ringing was sure to disturb Herbert. He might burst out, annoyed that she hadn't answered. Impatiently, trapped, she lifted the receiver. "Yes? Kathleen Sand speaking," she declared defiantly.

"Darling!" the voice of Janie Trumble sounded politely troubled. "I was so afraid that you had gone out for the day."

"I knew it!" Katy thought. "I won't let you get away with it though."

"Katy, dear, the most disturbing thing has happened."

"Yes?" Katy felt sickish. "We can do without you," she thought, "but now, oh now they'll all call up, one after the other."

"Darling, a couple of Trumble's old friends have just descended on us—positively descended. Trum hasn't seen them in ages. We simply can't leave them alone . . . ."

"There isn't anyone there at all," Katy thought, "I'm sure of it."

At her end, Janie listened to her silence. At last with some embarrassment she said, "Would you mind very much, Katy, if we

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MAY NATALIE TABAK has been a kindergarten teacher, a supervisor of a Federal Works Administration research project, and a social worker, and has published poetry in various periodicals. Her article "My Grandmother Had Yichus" appeared in the April 1949 COMMENTARY. She is at present working on a novel.

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brought John and Simeon along? Trum will get some extra liquor if you'll tell me what you're having."

"Of course," said Katy, amazed by this conventional summer-colony request. "How silly," she blurted. "Of course you must bring them. There's plenty of everything. Herbert will be delighted to have them. Absolutely."

They chattered a few minutes. When the call was over Katy waltzed around the room, singing to herself. The unexpected guests were a good omen. The party would be a success. Everyone would now come. She had been silly to doubt it.

Scuttling about, she collected vacuum cleaner and polish and cloths. "Herbert," she called at the door of his study, "that was Janie, just phoned. She wanted to bring a couple of Trum's friends." The speed with which he opened the door betrayed him. He also had heard the phone and been afraid, she thought. "He was too scared to come out, though."

"You told them they could come, didn't you?" he demanded, almost harshly. She nodded and he relaxed. Triumphantly they beamed at each other for a second, and then he quickly went back inside.

She hurried to the living room.

Having lugged the chairs and tables to the center of the room, she cleaned and polished every corner. Next she rearranged all the furniture; but the large sofa had to be returned to its wall—there was no other place for it. Katy looked around. The room seemed exactly as it had before. All a wasted effort. "It's the sofa," she concluded. "It's hopelessly drab. The whole room is spoiled by it."

Rage at the ugly thing tore at her, and she began yanking at it, trying to tug it into the next room. Suddenly, with a shrill, whining sound, the fabric ripped in her hands, and she fell backwards, knocking a floor lamp down with her. The door of the study flew open and Herbert rushed out. At his presence her frenzy vanished miraculously. She laughed as she burlesqued what had happened and he, observing their domestic etiquette, did not question her laughter but joined in ridiculing the ugly sofa.

As usual, an audience stimulated Katy's imagination, and she now leaped up and rushed upstairs, shouting, "I've got it."

Almost at once she was back, carrying a large colorful patchwork quilt in her arms. She threw it over the sofa, uttering little shrieks of pleasure at the transformation. Herbert agreed that the old monstrosity was quite wonderfully disguised. "The whole room looks different, doesn't it?" Katy pleaded. Herbert examined the scene expertly. "You've done a marvelous job," he said.

Content that she was happy again, he returned to his work.

KATY circled the room critically, moving a chair here and there; replacing it. From the shed behind the house she brought a small table, wiped the dirt and dust from it, and tried it tentatively next to each of the chairs. When satisfied, she covered it with a Paisley shawl, and carefully placed on that a porcelain candy plate and a Victorian soap dish also unearthed in the shed out of several boxes of discarded old china. "Just the thing for ash trays," she murmured happily. She tried looking at the room first from one door then the other, as if she were one of her guests seeing it for the first time. "When the food is there, it will be perfect," she thought peacefully.

Noticing how late it was getting, she reluctantly left for the kitchen. With a flourish, she checked off her list of things to be done. Though it had been intended only as a reminder for herself, she could not resist adding to it the improvement to the sofa, for the pleasure of checking that, too, off.

As she cut cold meats and prepared dishes of olives and pickled nuts, she fancied herself explaining the changed appearance of the living room to her guests. She tossed her head, waved her hands, and smiled deprecatingly at the cries of amazement and enthusiasm her creation evoked.

From a bookshelf she took a volume of reproductions of modern art and opened it

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to a Picasso still life. Carefully she duplicated its shapes in slices of white bread, and put them in the oven. On a large platter she prepared a palette of red and black caviar, mounds of shrimp and other pastes, and cream cheese she colored chartreuse. When the toast was ready she set to work like any artist with a sketch to follow, assembling the Picasso forms and coloring them from her palette. Walking around the table she admired the result, licking from her finger bits of food wiped from the platter to which she still clung unconsciously. At last she felt the need to be appreciated and called "Herbert, Herbert," in so urgent a voice that her husband came bounding out of his study with a frightened, "What's the matter? What's happened now?"

Katy pointed to her handicraft with pride. "What is it?" he asked in courteous perplexity. "It looks like a Picasso." "Doesn't it!" She was thrilled. He had recognized it. "But the colors are Gauguin. They're the canapés." Now it was his turn to circle the table and admire.

Again he complimented her on her work, and Katy said he could now return to his study until she had prepared the remaining plates of food. "Then you clear up and wash the kitchen floor while I take a bath," she added.

He hadn't bargained for washing the floor, but he did not object. Pausing at the door of the study he called, "Have you enough flowers?" Flowers! Tears of sudden weariness filled her eyes. "I forgot all about flowers." She glared at the list accusingly. "Hurry, hurry. I need bunches, bunches." She rushed him to the door with final instructions, "No roses; everyone has roses. And pick watermelon vines—" "Watermelon vines!" Herbert balked, quite shocked. "What for? If you pick them—" "I know, I know," impatiently hustling him along. "But we always have too many melons anyway. I need the vines. No one will guess what they are. Get several. Long ones!" He was not convinced, but he nodded and was off, on the run, while she bustled about the shed, collecting unlikely containers; an old tobacco jar, a soup tureen, a pâté jug, and various bowls and bottles whose original contents and use had been long forgotten. Tenderly Katy washed them, half-consciously recognizing a kinship with these articles she had rescued from oblivion. As though, in exchange for the new identity she was about to give them, they would deflect to her the admiration their uniqueness and charm would excite from her guests; and that same act which transformed them into vases would acknowledge her as a woman of originality, wit, and grace.

She was drying the last of the pieces when Herbert returned, his arms loaded. "I brought some wild grapes, too," he mumbled. "I don't know if you'll want to use them—?" "Wonderful, beautiful," at the sight of all the variety and color she felt grateful. "I'll do marvels with it all, you'll see." Watching her peacefully as she sorted and arranged flowers and vines in the queer vases, the strange notion idly occurred to him that his wife resembled his mother amazingly. They were both slight, tense, red-headed women and looked enough like each other, he noticed for the first time, to be mother and daughter. He, tall and dark and slow-moving, seemed actually to belong to neither one. He wondered if it was because his mother was a Galician Jew and his wife a first-generation Irish American that he had never before seen the resemblance suddenly so evident. Rather enjoying his discovery, he allowed himself to carry the speculation further, playing a child's jigsaw puzzle game, making a mold of his mother's characteristics and fitting his wife's behavior into the form. He felt vaguely pleased and disturbed as he realized that there was not just an outer semblance but rather a subterraneous kinship between them of inexplicable desires and sudden unpredictable reactions. He recalled that his father, too, had never seemed to know just what it was that would arouse his mother's most intense feelings. Herbert, on the other hand, did know in a general sense what disturbed his mother; her repeated recitals in her almost pleasant sing-

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song voice had made the cause of her misery somewhat clear. She believed that the cleavage between herself, a Galician Jew, and her husband's family and friends, all "Litvaks," was too wide for bridging. Neither time nor joys nor troubles shared ever allowed her to suspend her suspicion and resentment of them. It was sufficient for his mother to pronounce a word in the Galician manner to produce a raised eyebrow, a pause in the conversation, some subtle slight, which always eluded her husband and son, but which she never failed to note, and later to comment on with much scorn and bitterness. At least Katy, he thought with protective loyalty, hid her disappointments with gallantry. But this comforting thought was crabbed immediately by an intuition that perhaps so had his mother in the beginning. A sense of cold cramped his body now as it had when, as a child, he had recoiled from the terrible anguish his mother exuded in all her social encounters. Since he had only seen her with his father's tribe, he had always assumed that contact with anyone would affect his mother in the very same way. Consequently he had never invited his playmates to his home, meeting them on the street, in the library, at the movies, instead. Beginning to feel agitated at this introspection so unusual to him, he resented Katy's uneasiness which had provoked it. After all, she should have no grievance, being an American among Americans, just as good as any of them. Without having given thought to the subject, he had vaguely taken it for granted that some baptismal rite had initiated her into both the church and the DAR as it were—and both at the same time.

His experiences with his mother had forced him to recognize that geographic snobbisms exist among certain Jews, and later, to his mild astonishment, he had learned that a similar rivalry could be found in Harlem, as among the West Indian Negroes and the others. But that white, non-Jewish Americans did not all feel free and exactly equal never occurred to him—the subject neither interesting nor concerning him, in fact; except insofar as it had been forced on his attention by the anxieties of others. He had grown up to be a rather diffident man, warily dodging unpleasantnesses, content to leave the ordering of his home social life to his womenfolk, first his mother and now his wife.

Following his wife's twitching movements he decided that she, not being a Galician Jew, had no reason, that is, as a man understands a reason, for her tensions. For that matter, he went further in grim humor and decided that his mother also had had no actual cause for her moods and suspicions; that really, this was just pure, mysterious, feminine shenanigans—almost organically characteristic of the entire sex, and certainly nothing to be judged by masculine laws of logic or sense.

Satisfied that he had found a scientific explanation of the passionate intensity of the two red-headed women (that there was no explanation) he quickly began to wash the things Katy had used. Idly they exchanged words, companionably scarcely heeding the responses; each serenely continuing his tasks and private visions, secure momentarily in a mutual dream of the future.

At last the kitchen work was over. Herbert helped Katy carry the flowers and food into the other room. "I'll wash the floor while you place these where you want them, Kitten," he said. So genial had their mood become that neither was startled at the use of the discarded nickname. Instead, she blew a kiss to him and, feeling beautiful and gracious, began her display of vases and platters. They finished almost simultaneously, and Herbert joined her for a final inspection tour of the house. To show that he was interested, he suggested that Katy exchange two of the flower settings, but she explained the theory of her choice and he agreed. Again the clock reminded them of the passing of time, and he entered his study, while she went upstairs to bathe and dress.

But all the time that she was dressing, the doubt that he had introduced gnawed at her. Perhaps the tall bouquet might really look better on the small table. The uncer-

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tainty bothered her so that she ran down the steps still buttoning her dress to make sure that she had been right.

She had. The small table would be overpowered by anything but the squat bowl. Everything was perfect. "It's as pretty as a picture," she thought.

As this phrase occurred to her, she felt suddenly faint and ill. "The room looks too 'charming,'" she groaned, "as if I were anxious to please Them. They'll sneer." She could hear Them. Each malicious joke. Each ironic compliment. "I'll never live it down." Her fears returned. Her hands flew, tightly clenched, to her temples. Her mouth opened wide, but she did not permit herself to make a sound. Her husband's typewriter stopped for a moment and she could hear the kitchen clock warning her that there was very little time left. Her despair and panic seemed more than she could bear. Frantically she snatched the offensive vase of flowers and hurled it to the floor, where it smashed, spilling water and petals and leaves. The crash brought Herbert to the door with a rush. He stared down at the mess, aghast. Not daring to look at Katy, he sat down on the floor to pick up the broken glass. Katy leaned against a wall, exhausted, reckless, and not a little bewildered. All day they had both been traveling toward this moment.

"Go upstairs and lie down," said Herbert, his eyes carefully fixed on the floor. "I'll clear up. There's plenty of time. They'll not come for some time yet."

She had forgotten about him. His confusion and distress restored her self-confidence and good humor.

"Never mind," she said with the familiar toss of her head. "I'm not tired. The fool thing slipped. I'll get a mop and pail and we'll have it cleaned up in a jiffy." In an instant she was back and together they restored order. "Let's have a drink," she suggested. "Why wait for those leeches."

Her laughter reassured him. The broken glass had probably really been an accident. Gratefully, he scrambled to his feet, and together they scuttled around the kitchen, getting bottles and ice and glasses for themselves.

Katy was right, he thought. They were just a bunch of party leeches. Let them come and see how little their coming mattered. He and Katy really needed no one else. They'd both get drunk, roaring drunk. That would show Them. For a moment he fancied Katy and himself as heavy drinkers, irresponsible characters. He grabbed Katy by the elbows and whirled her around the room as he sang a few bars of a German popular song. They both laughed boisterously, and fell exhausted into chairs. They feverishly described their guests in scathing gibes, vying in contempt and ridicule, and each applauded the other's conceits. She flourished her glass and told Herbert the latest bit of gossip about one of the men, and he, howling at her manner of reporting it, responded with the pun he had made the other times she had told this story. They gaily refilled their glasses. Neither one was accustomed to drinking much, and as they dispatched the second drink with determination and gusto, their voices rose hilariously and their jokes became more intimate and scandalous. He threatened to drop an ice cube down her back and she dared him to try. They chased around the kitchen table stumbling and laughing loudly, and then the dogs began to bark and they heard cars drive in.

THE witches' sabbath was over. The cock had crowed. Each stared at the other and abruptly sobered. Katy looked at the table and the two forlorn glasses—evidence that *they* had been forced to drink alone, whereas the Others had been having fun together. Their arrival in a body proved it. It wasn't fair.

"You better go meet them, Katy," Herbert mumbled. "I have to get the ice out." "Herbert," she started to object, then stopped, frightened lest she voice her sudden hatred of him. She needed a husband at her side. Otherwise, how establish her social value? Without Herbert as an ally it was hard to maintain her courage. The world was too aloof, too indifferent. But once again he

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had abandoned her to the enemy. There was nothing to be done about it.

She adjusted her face in an eager smile of welcome and hastened to the door. And as always, to brace herself for the shock of meeting her guests, she paused at the window to scrutinize them behind a curtain and tabulate their weaknesses. It was a ritual that usually worked; by it she could build a feeling of security and superiority for herself. Generally, though, they came across the lawn alone, or as isolated couples, looking, to her, helpless and vulnerable. But this time there were too many of Them. It was she who was alone. As if deliberately, the crowd made no move to come in. They stood out there against the setting sun, laughing, together, indifferent to her anxiety. Suddenly she could bear it no longer, and she hurried towards them—"like a moth to the flame," thought Herbert bitterly, watching her from his own secret post behind a kitchen window, and flinched professionally, at his own cliché.

But it was not like a moth that she crossed the lawn; neither flying nor fluttering, but rather scurrying with the anxious waddle of a frightened scrawny goose, moving as if she carried her secret misery like contraband insecurely fastened between her skinny thighs.

"And then the old woman—" came the high-pitched voice of Robin, almost choking with laughter at his own story.

"They aren't talking about me," Katy thought, her surprised relief so great that she almost liked these kind, jovial people who were her friends, and she shouted a gay greeting to them.

A blank silence seemed to fall on the crowd. "Because they've remembered where they are. Why do they have to look so gloomy? No one forced them to come," Katy thought. But she dared not indulge herself further in this direction. Instead she bustled up with a barrage of welcome. Indiscriminately and lavishly she strewed compliments about on everyone and everything, like rice at a wedding. And, although everyone ducked a bit in involuntary avoidance, they began to look pleased just the same and, as they swaggered toward the house, the self-satisfaction Katy had poured over them glittered in their eyes and voices; while she trailed behind, a dragging emptied sack.

They descended on the house. They made it theirs. "Food!" someone shouted, and in a moment it seemed the plates were emptied. All that remained on the Picasso canapé platter were bits of pepper and carrot. They moved the furniture into groupings that suited their fancy, and resigned themselves to having a good time. They invited each other to have a drink, and one even shouted, "Hey, Joe, get Katy a drink."

The carefully selected vases of flowers were shoved away, or set on the floor in corners to make room for pocketbooks and bottles. Katy sat clutching her drink; she had been decently provided for and could as decently now be forgotten. She thought of her husband safe in the kitchen, doing anything that would enable him to escape being with people, and suspicion that this was so filled Katy with loathing for him. "He leaves everything to me," she thought vengefully. It seemed to her obvious that everyone had come out of a feeling of pity, or else guilt because they, for no reason at all, disliked Herbert and herself. She clasped her hands in desperation, and her bright green eyes glared helplessly about the room. Somehow They must be forced to appreciate her; and Herbert. In a strident voice she announced, "I had the most gruesome dream last night."

Startled, everyone stopped talking and stared at her. They had completely forgotten their hosts. Now Katy's speech appeared to embarrass them. Hurriedly she described a dream, creating a sequence as she talked. She made a funny anecdote of it, exaggerating her predicaments and assuming ludicrous postures. The guests listened politely; the story was amusing and well told. After all she was a writer. They made feeble attempts at laughter, but they sensed something behind the story, and not understanding her intensity they felt uneasy and put upon and

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resentful. Their coldness permeated the room, and the obvious relief with which they promptly resumed their drinking and private conversations when she had finished made Katy flush with new humiliation. She had behaved like a clown for Them and to no purpose. Her glass was empty and no one had thought to refill it. For a moment she was angry at the negligence of the hosts until she recalled that she, herself, was giving this party. She felt drained of energy by her last effort, but also conspicuous sitting there alone in her corner. Across the room a flabby group were hilarious at the latest gossip about a rival artist who happened to be absent, and she recalled, with immediate renewal of vigor, a choice bit of scandal she had invented the night before to delight Herbert. She hurried across the room, her feet flapping like wet flippers on the hard carpet.

"Have you heard about the Lundys?" She archly handed her empty glass to one of the men and launched into her tale. But, bewitched, her timing was as usual wrong. It was as if she were forever running onstage in some play, with her role well learned and acted, but always when the curtain had already rung up on a new scene for the other actors—who first ad libbed to save the situation (seeming bewildered by her performance) and then restored it to its current drama, a drama which had no part in it for her. So this cast now assumed an air of righteousness as if they themselves had not just been gossiping, and their silent condemnation and implied reproach almost suffocated Katy. She longed for Herbert, his sympathy and appreciation, and gaily giggled, "I must run and see what's been happening to Herbert in the kitchen."

"Do," they urged her, and with inspired cordiality added, "Tell him to come out and join the party."

"That's very gracious of you," she thought bitterly as she waved and flurried out to the kitchen, laughing loudly to show what a good time she had been having.

"Come on," she tugged at Herbert's arm, weaving a bit as if somewhat drunk, "it's a wonderful party. Everyone's asking for you." His face lighted up with surprised pleasure. Although now that Katy said that they really wanted him, he no longer really felt aggrieved, nevertheless he felt obliged to resist somewhat, and said, "They could have come in here, you know."

"They didn't dare. I've been holding them at bay. But you had better come out now, or they'll all be piling in here after you." He grinned at her, and she believed her story. They were a popular young couple, talented and handsome. Hand in hand they almost skipped out of the kitchen.

The crowd shouted greetings, and someone said, "There you are, you old so-and-so," and clapped Herbert on the shoulder. A girl flung her arms around him drunkenly, and Simeon said, "That was a fine story you had in last month's *Ledger*." Although no one respected Simeon's literary taste, his approval was kindly, and Katy felt gratitude. It *was* a good party. She scurried back to the kitchen for another platter of food. Everything was going fine. They sure had liked her story about the Lundys. "I have a million of them, a million," she teased herself delightedly.

From group to group she scuttled, offering food and drinks. Herbert stood surrounded by several women, and pride in his shy handsomeness injected her with warmth and serenity. She listened to the three she happened to be serving at the moment.

"Poor Karl," fat, well-meaning Naomi was saying. "They may have to put a silver plate in his head."

"How horrible," Robin shuddered. "Imagine going around all your life like that."

"That's nothing," said Katy casually. "I've a silver plate in my head. I've had it for years. I forget about it now that the hair has grown over it," she added as she caught Naomi's incredulous glance at her thick red hair. "Only, when I fix my hair, the comb makes a strange sound over that spot."

She laughed carelessly as at the memory, then laughed again defiantly at their startled faces. As they said nothing, however,

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she darted to another group with her offering of food. The drinks had sharpened their appetites again, and they greeted her warmly. But after they had eaten as much as they wanted, she continued to linger there, like a waitress hovering about for a tip. At first silent, they finally all began to talk at once; and then together all stopped, embarrassed, "Go ahead—no, really—it was nothing important, you go on."

Katy tittered nervously. At that Janie said, "Well, Katy, we don't see very much of you these days. You're almost never at the beach any more."

"Herbert has been working very hard at his novel, and what with the gardening and the translating, he hasn't got much time to drive us down," replied Katy eagerly, charmed that her absence had been noticed.

Rita then added a friendly remark in her hearty croak, "Pity you never learned to drive a car."

There was not a moment's hesitation. "But I can drive a car," Katy's voice lilted with tolerant amusement. "The trouble is I have double vision, that's all. I see two of everything, you know."

The polite noncommittal faces before her were irritating, forcing her on from sentence to sentence. "When I was twelve, I drove the family car from Kansas to Detroit. Alone. All the state troopers were out searching for me, but I hid out during the day and used back roads at night. I wanted to see a favorite friend who had moved there. The family thought I was too young to travel by train. So I secretly ran away. I forgot to take any money and I can tell you, I was starved when I arrived."

"I bet," said Janet, shortly. The others said nothing.

"It was a Pontiac," said Katy, conclusively, turning away and going into the kitchen as if some duty called her.

"What's wrong with them?" she asked herself fiercely. "Double vision is very common. Anyone might have it. And as if I wouldn't have driven that car—to Canada even—if my father had had one. Besides, I only said it to show my contempt for those car-driving cats. That should be as plain as the nose on their face. Especially the nose on Robin's face." The thought of the size of Robin's nose consoled her and she giggled. "Formidable!" she exclaimed, and struck what seemed to her a French pose.

HERBERT walked in just then. With a conspiratorial glee she hustled him to the kitchen table. Together they huddled over it, while she whispered a farcical version of both stories.

"They swallowed that?" he demanded in credulous delight.

"Hook, line, and sinker," she almost shouted, and they rocked back and forth, hugging themselves in glee, while from the next room outbursts of mirth reached them.

"It's a grand party," said Herbert between gasps of his own laughter. She had laughed so hard, tears were running down her cheeks.

She nodded. "A wonderful party."

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE CASE OF THE IRON MOTHER-IN-LAW

A Stranger in the House

LOUIS ZARA

THE dressmaker's dummy, headless and buxom, with an iron wire-skirt and a tripod foot, stood in a corner near the icebox. Because there were small children in the house, Mama Kramer covered the metal nakedness of the bosom with an old plaid sleeveless jacket. Otherwise, summer and winter, it presided silently over stove, sink, and table, and the affairs of the kitchen.

From behind his newspaper Papa Kramer muttered, "She counts every bite you put in your mouth. Who needs her here?"

"Does she ask for bread?" his wife countered. "Does she ask for drink? She stands there, let her stand."

"Like an iron mother-in-law!" he growled. But it was true that she did not ask for bread and she did not ask for drink. Still, to show his disapproval, he sat with his back to her. "How many women can live in one flat?"

"She does not utter a word! Does she say as much as one word: 'Hello' or 'Goodbye'?"

"Ha, that's all we need!" he snapped. "If she opened her mouth I would throw her out with my bare hands—though I am a peaceful man."

Such remarks were often exchanged in her presence; the iron mother-in-law stood silent. Sometimes Mama Kramer fitted a blouse or a skirt on her. Once Harry tossed his baseball cap on the metal neck. "Who puts a baseball hat on a woman?" demanded his mother and would have slapped his bottom.

"Have respect!" Papa Kramer put in. "For an older person have respect."

She frowned at her husband. "How does it look—a baseball cap?"

"Some people stand from boarders," said the man. "We have *her*."

THE winter of the big snows, when the drifts piled up six feet on either side of the street and the whole city churned like a flour mill, Papa Kramer came down with an inflammation in his chest. He swallowed pills, sipped honey in hot milk, and suffered compresses and mustard plasters. But the only one it did any good for was Shmulevitch the corner druggist, lately from Odessa with three unmarried daughters.

The invalid groaned, wheezed, and sneezed. When he raised himself for a cough the windowpanes rattled.

"Be careful!" Mama Kramer begged.

"Let them stick new putty in the frames!" he retorted. "When a man has a cough should he worry about frozen glass?"

Naturally, since he was home, Papa Kramer was not earning.

Another week, and the snow turned to ice and his cold to a burning fever. Once when he got up—as obstinate as an ox, that man!—and went to blow a hole in the frost on the

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"PERIODICALLY," reports LOUIS ZARA, "Mama Kramer rises to plague me: I shouldn't be surprised if she ends up in a volume all her own." Meanwhile, we present the third Kramer story to appear in this department (the last one, "Boarders," was in the November 1950 issue). Again Mama Kramer's bustling practicality collides with Papa Kramer's Jewish pride, and we are given a new version of the eternal triangle—the third party being in this case a dressmaker's dummy. Mr. Zara, an executive with the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company of Chicago, has published many short stories and several novels. He is secretary of the Chicago Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League.

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kitchen window to peer out—he sighted the dummy in the corner.

"The *shviger* is still here!" he sighed. "Hot, cold, *she* doesn't get consumption. The Devil doesn't snatch her, while I, father of a family, cough like a bass drum!"

"Have mercy!" pleaded Mama Kramer. "What harm does she do?"

"Harm!" He clutched at his chest. "She gives me the Evil Eye!"

Immediately she clapped her hand to his forehead, became pale, and ushered him back to bed.

That night the children asked, "Is it true, Mama, about the iron mother-in-law? Can she give the Evil Eye?"

Mama Kramer was beside herself. "How can she when she has no head?"

From his bedroom her husband bellowed, "Those are the worst ones, the *shvigers* that have no head!"

"I'll call a doctor!" she threatened.

"I'll throw him down all the stairs," he replied smugly. "Sick as I am, I'll do it. When one of the children grows up there'll be a doctor in the family. Till then I'll not support a stranger with my sweat and blood."

By the third week Mama Kramer was feeding her family on credit. Slemo Marcus the butcher made no complaint, but he trimmed off more suet when she paid cash on the counter. At Lebke's Grocery Mama Kramer cut her weekly purchases in half. She bought barley, grits, and rice, and decided that they should subsist on milk dishes: everyone eats too much meat anyway. For the Friday evening dinner she prepared chopped beef liver instead of *gefilte* fish and stuffed her *knishes* with mashed potatoes instead of ground veal.

On Sunday morning she rummaged in all the secret jars in the pantry for the loose change put by for the gas bill, the milkman, and the tea-and-coffee man. She regretted the new curtains from the installment peddler—only a quarter a week—but the old ones had been so threadbare.

She was stirring the barley porridge when her glance fell on the iron mother-in-law. She puckered her mouth, and shook her head from side to side. Then, she smiled to herself. She looked in on the sick man, sponged his forehead and, over his protests, made him swallow the last pill. She struggled into her good corset and her black dress with the peplum. She took her coat with the wolf-fur collar, told each of the children to keep an eye on a younger one, and hurried out.

She trudged through the drifts down to Twelfth Street and calmly paraded past the shops. She studied the fashions, eyeing each dress carefully. With forefinger to cheek, she absorbed the details of the flares and waists, sleeves and necklines. Then she began to call on her neighbors. It was true that the peppery Mrs. Epstein was an excellent dressmaker, but she was also independent and her rates were high; and Mama Kramer knew every one of her customers.

Mrs. Kirchberg, whose husband owned the chicken market, was her first prospect.

"Mama Kramer! Goldie! On such a day you're out in the street?"

"Who can stay inside all day?" Mama Kramer smiled. "Mrs. Kirchberg, today I was looking at my Singer. It stands idle, and the fingers itch to sew. Pillowcases, sheets, blouses, skirts—nothing fancy. But I have a little time and—between old friends—the pockets are a little empty since the Mister is in bed. When I was a girl I did it. So in the morning Goldie Kramer becomes a seamstress again!"

Mrs. Kirchberg was so astonished that she stopped thinking about how she had received her caller without slipping on the new diamond ring that had cost her so many tears in the night.

"But I have enough sheets—"

Mama Kramer waved one hand peremptorily. "It's a big house—God bless it!—and if *you* don't need anything, your little ones—God bless *them!*—do. Come, come, when Goldie Kramer knocks on the door to ask for work, don't you sing me songs, Sadie Kirchberg."

"Except for what is torn."

"I can do mending, too. Proud I am not."

That settled it.

The next stop was at Mrs. Mayer's. Her husband delivered pop and had a good route.

Mrs. Mayer confessed that she needed guimpes and kimonos, perhaps also a corset-cover. "And it would be only right if you bought something from my man, too."

Mama Kramer shrugged. "When we have a wedding in the family I'll order pop."

"And beer, too."

"A whole case."

By noon she had orders for a dozen sheets,

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two dozen pillowcases, four corset-covers, two kimonos, and three guimpes, and the material for a ruffled petticoat, a middy blouse, and black bloomers for Mrs. Cohen's little Shirley, and a sofa slipcover for Mrs. Gratz, the undertaker's wife.

As soon as she had fetched her parcels home she took the cut-glass vase off the Singer and pushed the machine from the dining room into the kitchen. While the children clamored around her she opened the table-top, raised the machine, and cleaned the arm and the moving parts. Harry got down on his knees to work the treadle and screamed as he caught his forefinger in the moving belt.

After she had served the family dinner and made the patient comfortable, Mama Kramer cleared the table. She brought out her scissors and tape measure and went to work.

"What is she doing there?" the invalid asked Dave as the youngsters ran barefoot through the house before bedtime.

"Mama's at the Singer."

He was thoughtful. "Is this a time of day to be at the Singer?"

"She's making a new dress for the mother-in-law."

All evening he listened to the Singer, but the treadle never ceased its jogging. "You'll wake the neighbors! Are you sewing for a bride over there?"

"Sleep, sleep! What I'm sewing must be sewed."

He subsided.

When at last she came to the bed he said good-humoredly, "By you the Singer goes like a machine."

"It's a machine so it goes like a machine." She was weary; the leg that had pumped the treadle ached.

The next morning she was up at dawn. It was her baking day, so she built a fire in the cookstove and, when the kitchen had warmed, mixed the yeast dough and set it to rise.

Before either her children or her husband had stirred, she was stepping about the iron mother-in-law, pinning and basting, quietly humming as she fitted the guimpe to Mrs. Mayer's measurements.

At noon the smell of the baking made Papa Kramer's stomach growl. He came down, yawning and rubbing his unshaven jowls. "Fresh bread!" he exulted.

"There's tea, have tea. And put on slippers. The floor is cold."

He frowned. The table was strewn with pieces of yard goods. His wife sat at the machine, her foot working and her head bowed over, while the cloth slid swiftly under the chattering needle. His gaze darted toward the iron mother-in-law. "Ho, ho!" he boomed. "What goes on here?"

She did not look up. "Sit down. The tea will get cold."

He placed a cube of sugar between his lips and sucked the steaming hot liquid from his glass. "On the *shviger*—for who is the ball dress?"

"Is not a ball dress."

"Is it a fur coat?" he flung at her.

"A guimpe for Mrs. Mayer."

"For her you have to blind your eyes, Mama? He sells pop, he makes a good living."

"He takes nothing from our mouths."

He munched the sugar and poured the tea into his saucer. He saw her take up the material for a corset-cover, observed that it was indeed for a stranger, and blinked. When she began to hem a sheet he squirmed restlessly.

"With the children and the household, and the cooking and the baking, you have not enough to do? Must you sew rags for every silver fox in the neighborhood?"

The Singer stuttered as she ran a long seam. "I do not do this from charity."

His jaw dropped. "For money!"

She ran another hem.

Weakly he got to his feet. "By us in the family the women were not labor-workers."

She shrugged.

"Give back the rags!" he commanded. He glowered at the *shviger*. "I make a living."

"Lying in bed?" she wanted to retort, but held her tongue.

"Because I have not been working?" he prodded gloomily. "So when a man is sick his wife has to be a labor-worker."

She did not reply, and soon he shuffled back to the bedroom. She heard him groaning as he burrowed under the sheets. He would lie there staring at the ceiling.

The bell rang. Mrs. Mayer had come to fit her guimpes and kimonos. Mama Kramer hurried to shut the door to the bedroom.

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That evening even the children were subdued over the grits. For each spoonful that their father lifted was accompanied by an angry glance at the kimono draped on the mother-in-law. He was still coughing, and his eyes were rheumy, but now he cleared his throat. "My mother never came to live with us, your mother never came to live with us. But this ugly *shviger*, a creature without feeling, we give the room."

Mama Kramer crimsoned. "Eat, children, eat!"

When he went to the bathroom to shave and complained about the hot water she understood his intentions.

"The oldest boy is in high school," she murmured at his elbow. "Expenses. A mechanical drawing set costs money. Carfare costs money. Notebooks cost money—"

"By us in the family," he spoke from the midst of his lather, "the women didn't work."

"Not to support the family," she pleaded. "For his school."

"By us the men didn't lay in bed all day like bankers while the women brought in the money." He addressed his shaving mirror.

"Avram, a few sheets and dresses."

"You learned that from the *shviger!* I should never have let that woman into the house!"

She wrung her hands. "I *must* finish what I promised—"

"Then finish the rags! But no more. Do you hear?"

She pleaded that he return to bed, but he was adamant. The next morning he had no sooner dragged himself out of the house than she attacked her sewing furiously. In two days she could be done with the work.

But Mrs. Kirchberg had recommended her to a sister-in-law, Mrs. Loew, and, in the afternoon, Mrs. Mayer sent two of her cousins who wanted cottage curtains. Mama Kramer excused herself from the complicated tasks. However, she could not refuse the simple sewing. If she cleared everything away before he came home how would Avram know?

Each evening Papa Kramer eyed the *shviger* suspiciously. After his day's toil he was sorely fatigued and had no energy for disputation. She did not open the Singer in his presence, so he asked no questions.

Then he observed that every evening now brown paper bundles lay near the mother-in-law. But she had promised— He lifted his forefinger at the *shviger*: "That woman will degrade us all yet!"

Mama Kramer was silent.

"I say that until she is out of the house we will have no peace."

She pretended she did not hear him.

"King Solomon had a thousand wives, and what did he say about them? Was there one woman of worth—" His resort to Solomon's wisdom was generally his most crushing rebuke, but Mama Kramer did not reply.

One evening another heavy snow began to fall. Thick white flakes descended all through the night. By morning the skies cleared and left the roofs and windows crowned and bearded with white. The children whooped through the streets. They made snowballs, tried their sleds, lost their mittens, and reveled in the glorious winter.

On his way home from work Papa Kramer observed his youngsters rolling a huge snowball down the walk. The snow was soft and the sphere grew rapidly. As they paused to set another large ball on top of the first he lingered.

"It's a snowman!" shouted Harry.

"A snowman!" echoed Dave.

At supper he declared soberly, "On such a day it is a pity not to be young again."

Mama Kramer was not listening. She was nervous lest he chide her about the paper of pins stuck in one shoulder of the *shviger*. He smiled bitterly. She was ignoring his instructions. He went to bed early.

This time it was he who arose before the others. When Mama Kramer offered to make his breakfast he patted her shoulder. "Sleep, sleep, what is there to get?"

As soon as he was dressed he tiptoed to the *shviger*. "Miserable woman!" he hissed tragically. "Ugly creature! Lilith!" He tore away the paper of pins and sneered at her. Carefully he embraced the figure and carried it through the back door, out upon the porch, down the stairs, and into the snow in front of the house. The sun was not yet up.

He stooped, and with his gloved hands began to plaster large gobs of snow on the iron shape. Fortunately, no one was abroad to see Avram Kramer busily sculpting a snow-woman about the dressmaker figure. When he had satisfied himself that the framework was concealed, he rolled a huge ball for a

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head. Then he grimaced, shook his coat, slapped his gloves, and went back for his lunchbox.

Not until the children had left for school did Mama Kramer miss the *shviger*. Her heart sank. She scurried to peer into the closets and quickly jerked open the pantry door. But it was nowhere. Heavily she dropped into a chair and covered her face with her hands. He had hidden it, of that she was certain. But where?

True, she had continued with her sewing and had not kept her promise, but why was he so obstinate? She only wanted to bring a few dollars into the house. She dashed out on the porch and down into the alley. Nowhere! But time was wasting, and she had much to do. When she had calmed herself she approached the Singer and, sorrowfully, proceeded with the sewing.

Coming home for their lunch at noon, Harry and Dave located the snow-woman. With glad cries they hailed the rare find. They fixed stones for eyes and buttons and pushed a stick into the mouth for a cigar.

After school the entire neighborhood of children gathered around the figure. They supplied her with a bustle and quickly chose up sides for a snowball war.

In the evening Mama Kramer awaited her husband on the stoop. "Avram, what did you do with her?" She plucked at his sleeve.

"You are talking to me?"

"I am talking to you. The *shviger*. What have you done with her?"

"Something has happened?"

"Something has happened; and you know what has happened."

He shrugged.

Indoors, before he could reach for his paper, she put her arm on his shoulder tenderly. "One doesn't throw a creature like that out into the street."

He did not lift his eyes. "Who threw her out?"

"Then you must have hidden her."

"Why should I hide her?" he rumbled. "She came by herself, she went by herself."

"There is work I promised to do."

"No, no!" he retorted solemnly. "You must have finished that work long ago. You promised."

She bit her lips.

Later that evening the doorbell rang. Mrs. Kosoff had arrived to have her dress fitted.

As she entered, Papa Kramer's face darkled. "I do not want this going on in the house."

"The *shviger* is gone," she moaned, "so I have to fit on the body." She led Mrs. Kosoff into the dining room.

When he peered in at them a trembling seized him. For kneeling before the other woman was Mama Kramer, the pins between her lips, the yellow tape measure over her arm, while she basted the hem of Mrs. Kosoff's dress.

He could hardly contain himself until the neighbor had left. "I do not want you kneeling before people!" he boomed. "She is not the Kaiser that you should kneel to her."

"I did not kneel to her."

"I saw you kneeling, Goldie. You were on your knees, Goldie. This is America, and in America people don't kneel."

Her eyes glinted. "When the *shviger* comes back," she murmured, "I won't kneel."

He did not address her again all evening. In the morning he was once more the first to arise. This time he was outdoors before he had found his muffler or put on his overshoes. He walked around and around the snow-woman, scratching his cheek perplexedly. The children had patted so much snow on the figure that it would take him two hours to get the *shviger* out. He dug frantically at the shape. But the rascals had poured on water, and the whole mass had frozen overnight.

Someone was stirring indoors. He skipped back into the house.

Every morning now he kept a sharp eye on the snow-woman. But the temperature remained near zero, and the *shviger* was bluish-white and frozen solid. In disgust he struck the stick out of her mouth and broke away part of her face. It was no good.

Each evening another of the women called for a fitting. He scuffled his feet and rattled his paper fiercely, but Mama Kramer offered no more apologies. She marched her women into the dining room, and there, deliberately, it seemed to him, went down on her knees. He was so angry he read the same column three times. However, as long as the frost continued what else could he do?

At last the weather became milder, and a thaw set in. Long icicles formed over the

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windows, the streets turned to slush, and the roofs dripped. Day after day he watched the ice melting from the snow-woman.

One morning the first iron rib showed. He struggled to break off the caked parts.

A shiver went up his back. Behind him someone was tapping.

Mama Kramer was standing at the window! As he turned she dropped the curtain.

Red-faced, he stomped back inside. "So now you know!"

"What?"

"Where she is."

"Who?" she asked blandly.

"Who? The *shviger*."

"The *shviger*?" she mocked. "The *shviger* is gone, lost, kidnaped."

He wished he could have a fit of coughing and arouse her sympathy. "The *shviger* is out there in the snow."

"I did not see her."

"Let the ice melt, and you'll see her."

Mama Kramer tossed her head. "Now I don't need her."

His mouth opened. "Is it better to kneel, to stoop before these women, a pop-driver's wife, a chicken-butcher's wife?"

"I do not mind."

"Mind!" he exploded. "To get down on your knees—"

"They are nice women. From them I earn money for the boy's high school. Why should I mind?"

"As soon as the *shviger* melts I will bring her inside."

She planted her fists on her hips. "Inside my house I'll have no rusty *shviger!*"

Mama Kramer was right. When the snow had finally melted, the dressmaker figure was no longer black. Every exposed metal part had yellowed with rust.

He carried the *shviger* up the porch stairs.

"Out!" commanded Mama Kramer at the door.

"Mama! You need her, you want her."

"My house is not a junk shop. Out!"

Helplessly, he lifted the *shviger* in his arms. "What should I do—"

"Out!"

IN DESPAIR he planted the *shviger* on the porch. In his tool chest he found an oil can, a large file, and several sheets of dark emery cloth. "It's dark outside."

"The stars are shining."

She concealed a smile as he took his flashlight and stormed out to attend the *shviger* on the porch. The rasping file set her teeth on edge, but she would not even look out the window.

Harry and Dave pulled on their overshoes. She clapped her hands. "Inside! My children are not junkmen!"

"Mama!"

"In!" she cried.

They went in.

For three evenings Papa Kramer worked on the *shviger*. When at last he had removed the rust and rubbed the metal clean, he mounted the threshold with the figure. "Happy New Year! Look who's here."

Mama Kramer did not speak. She watched him worry the figure into its corner.

That evening Mrs. Kirchberg called. Papa Kramer looked up from his paper. But his wife again marched the woman into the dining room.

"How long will this go on?" he asked despondently when the visitor had left. "The *shviger* is back, clean and fine."

"One woman in the house is enough."

"Goldie!"

"And King Solomon had a thousand wives—"

He grinned ruefully. "And a thousand *shvigers*. But if we have only one here, is it so bad?"

"I am a woman, too. What do I know?"

His joints cracked as he rose.

"Avram!"

Before she could stop him he had reached for a half-sewn guimpe and flung it over the *shviger*. "Then, Goldie, let *me* show you. A pin here, and a pin there!"

She pulled at his hands. "You'll tear—" He was so strong. "It's not mine."

Stubbornly he tugged at the dress.

"It's upside down!" she chuckled. "What does a man know?"

Dismayed, he stepped back.

She took off the garment and brought it down properly over the figure.

"Like so?"

"Like so." She found her pins and swiftly took in the waist. "Now you see?"

With a sigh he returned to his chair. Through the corner of his eyes he watched her working happily on the guimpe. He cleared his throat and rattled his newspaper. "Goldie, here's a story—listen good!"

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

SIX POEMS FROM THE "MAHBEROTH"

IMMANUEL OF ROME

IMMANUEL BEN SOLOMON of Rome, called Manoello, the greatest Hebrew poet of medieval Italy, was born in Rome, about 1270. For a time, he served as a dignitary in the Rome Jewish community; but his restlessness, and possibly the displeasure of the Italian *baale batim* ("pillars of the community") with the eroticism of his verse, led him through Perugia, Camerino, Verona, and Fermo before his death sometime after 1328. Way stations for his scholarship were a Hebrew grammar and commentaries on all the books of the Bible. But scholarship and restlessness alike found a more enduring place in Immanuel's masterpiece, his poetic work the *Mahberoth* ("Compositions"), a collection of his poems, short stories, treatises, meditations, and the like.

At his back, Immanuel heard the Hebrew poets of the Golden Age in Spain, the lyrics of Provence, and Italy's first songs; and at his side, the voices of Dante and the generation of the *dolce stil nuovo*. From his Hebrew and Arabic predecessors, he took the lyric convention of Moorish Spain; the native, though often outworn, Hebrew stock of images and snatches from the Song of Songs; and as a form for the separate sections of the *Mahberoth*, the *makama*, a debate or contest between the journeying poet and rivals met along the way. From Italian poetry, he borrowed the sonnet; and from Dante, the structure of the last section of the *Mahberoth*, a journey through hell and heaven, in somewhat stumbling parody of the *Commedia*.

But more than assimilation or adaptation awaits the reader of Immanuel. The *Mahberoth* is like a bedside manual, though hardly of devotions. For every vagrant impulse, the poet has fashioned either sonnet, quatrain, epigram, or a rhyming-prose harangue that weaves through escapades of love, word-duels, songs of insult, and random pieties and didacticisms. The total impression is of an often engaging, always glib poet, redeemed for memory by four graces: genuine humor; a sensuality alive enough to earn for the *Mahberoth* a prohibition by Joseph Caro in his *Shulhan Aruch;* invention in conceit; and the cunning of an ironsmith in shaping the Hebrew language to forms and sentiments it had never known before.

Not that judgment is important in reading Immanuel. There is little time for it. The line of his verse is serpentine; before one coil, recoil is done, another has begun. All is in the passing, pleasing undulations. These Immanuel has.

And so, I hope, do these translations. The liberties I have taken with the letter are hardly drastic; and with the soul, as few as time's long passage and the motley births of language have allowed.—ALLEN MANDELBAUM

The Joys of Camerino

"WHERE does your heart's encampment lie?" their question
came, and my reply, "In Camerino";
there was soul's desire, there we gathered
aloes, myrrh, and spices sovereign.

From death the doomed redeemèd were, and there,
I warrant, God's own city we beheld,
where damsels, in God's exaltation, reveled;
two cakes of purest manna were our fare.

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Upon my life, on maidens' cheeks I have
seen tears, and heard, like throbbing flutes, their love
entreating, "Till when are we your prisoners?"

Why moan, my soul, or sigh? To Camerino's
nymphs, send greetings, for they cried, "Alas,
the wanderer, who rends our heart's enclosure."

Song

Be not dismayed
if one whose ardor,
but today,
was fragrant as
mandragora

Should find his splendor
all has fled
when he's a-bed
with his belovèd,
Ophra;

For the sun
is not eclipsed
and not undone
until the moon
and he are one.

From the Hungry, Praise

I gaze on manna and on quail,
but voices warn, "Approach not here";
the banquet now is but a dream,
bereft, the grandeur of my soul.

For heart's redeemer is the onion,
onion, garlic, leek, my peace,
upon my head, fit coronal,
and for my soul-ills, unction.

Garlic is earth's stag and blossom,
Grace did bear him, Glory robed him,
over him—the Great Bear and her sons.

And wheel in wheel, like heaven's spheres,
the onion's skin; the leek, Elisha's
wand, in wondrous miracles.

The Shrew

So shall a man assay his soul
enduring evil womankind—
for as the howling desert wolf—
her hair may change, but not her mind.

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Time's Wit

Time crossed his hands in giving all
the graceful lasses to the fools,
who both night and day travail
to feast and gown their lovelies well.

While *they* seek chambers of delight
where gallants greet the lips of love
and, like the mocking thief, or slave,
for shadows yearn, the fall of night.

For had gazelles to stags been given,
then stag of stag would know but treason,
or love be shorn of excellence.

Ours be gazelles whom fools shall fatten,
and our dalliance be their pain;
evil take them, and the curse.

In Hell, Heaven

The soul within me shuns the Garden
and will court the vale of Tophet;
in Hell, the honeycomb is sweet,
the women beauteous and wanton.

What have I in Eden, where
no loved one is, but charred as pitch,
old ladies with the scurvy itch,
my soul would not be happy—there.

Then Eden, what have I with thee,
where all are maimed and impotent,
thou art as nothing in my eyes;

but Tophet gathers grace and glory,
each gazelle wears radiance,
and all delight the eye.

Allen Mandelbaum, the translator of these poems, was born in 1926, graduated from Yeshiva College in 1945, and holds a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University. He has published poetry in *Furioso,* and is at present working on a study of poetic drama.

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ON THE HORIZON

ALAS FOR JEWISH FOLK SONGS!

CHEMJO VINAVER

ONCE upon a time the publication of a book was considered an important matter. Among Jews it was the accepted custom for an author to submit his manuscript to the rabbinical authorities of his time for their *haskomes* (endorsement) before daring to publish it. The story is told of one young author soliciting *haskomes* from a famous rabbi for his commentaries on the Biblical books of Job and the Song of Songs. Having examined both manuscripts, the rabbi announced that he would grant his endorsement for the commentary on Job, but not for that on the Song of Songs. The bewildered author asked for an explanation, and the rabbi replied: "It's quite simple: Job was afflicted with many troubles, so one more can't hurt him. But tell me, what do you have against King Solomon who was spared such suffering?"

The logic of the rabbi's reasoning might possibly lead one to endorse the books being reviewed here,* for Jewish music has already suffered much at the hands of its leading exponents. But it is the only logic that would do so.

THE least to be expected of anyone undertaking to edit a collection of Jewish folk songs is a thorough familiarity with the existing material and the ability to evaluate the authenticity of previously published song notations. After all, it is conceivable that someone else has published a poor collection, and one cannot always rely on the books at hand. Miss Rubin's *Treasury of Jewish Folksong* is, unfortunately, a conglomeration of many bad anthologies where it is not an entirely unsuccessful attempt to improve upon the available material. Even songs still known by many people in the correct version are substantially distorted.

Among the source books mentioned by Miss Rubin in her selected bibliography are collections by F. M. Kaufmann and M. Kipnis. She might at least have treated these two highly competent men with respect and not tried to "improve" upon them. She might even have learned from them. From Fritz Mordechai Kaufmann, the German Jew who was utterly captivated by the Yiddish folk song when he first came into contact with Eastern European Jews during World War I, she might have learned a spirit of reverence in approaching this musical heritage, she might have tried to assimilate his profound grasp of the original material, the piety with which he handled every phrase, his deep understanding of the East European Jewish milieu that had hitherto been so strange to him. From the folk singer Kipnis she could have derived the true spirit of Jewish folk song. Kipnis not only knew every town and village of the old Poland, he was a child of the folk, singing their songs and learning from them. Constantly in touch with his people, he wrote their melodies down just as they were sung. Kipnis's approach was not infused with the awe and humility of the Western connoisseur Kaufmann, but in recording Jewish folk songs for

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CHEMJO VINAVER is the organizer and conductor of the distinguished Vinaver Chorus. He was born in Warsaw in 1900, studied in Berlin, and was choirmaster of the Berlin Jewish community for ten years.

*A *Treasury of Jewish Folksong*. By Ruth Rubin. Schocken Books. 224 pp. $4.50.

The Songs We Sing. By Harry Coopersmith. United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. 453 pp. $5.75.

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his collections Kipnis was painstakingly exact. His familiarity with the source enabled him to produce first-hand notations that are free of distortion.

Not only did Miss Rubin fail to learn from Kaufmann and Kipnis, she tampered with them, often to the point of completely spoiling some of the songs published in their collections. Occasionally it is appropriate for an editor to ignore his predecessors in the field and to score a folk melody according to his own understanding, but such a delicate task must remain the rare privilege of an expert. Miss Rubin demonstrates consistently her lack of musical understanding and a crass ignorance of the true folk idiom. It would be illuminating to list all the songs that have been put to death in her book in order to substantiate this criticism completely. However, as this might become too technical for the general reader, we shall cite only a few typical examples:

Amol Is Geven a Mayse. The stretching of the two-four time to four-four is entirely unwarranted. Miss Rubin's general tendency to slow down the melody is unfaithful to the character of Jewish folk song. Many of these songs are derived from synagogue chant, retaining its specific recitative character. Slowing down destroys this element, as can be seen in the above-mentioned song where the drawn-out four-four time eliminates the typical *parlando.* In addition, the melody is incorrectly noted. The fifth measure must begin with a fifth, as in Kipnis, or with a third, as in Kaufmann. If the latter, then F sharp is false, F natural correct. The two D's in the seventh measure are also false. It must be either F natural and D, as in Kaufmann, or G and D, as in Kipnis. The second half of the chorus is incongruous. One almost suspects that Miss Rubin has allowed herself to be influenced by some group rendition of the song, sung in thirds. That is how she noted, and crippled, it. The final four bars are just thrown together.

Mit a Nodl, on a Nodl. The sin of stretching the note-values becomes even more evident here. The little tailor should chant his song much in the manner of the Yeshiva student bent over his Talmud, and the music reflects both rhythm and gesture, expressed in the two-four time. Miss Rubin, however, rashly disposes of these essentials by forcing upon the song a three-four time. In a correct notation, the seventh and eighth measures approximate the effect of a quickly spoken phrase (*"Ney ich mir b'kovod godl"*). But our editor prefers that the word *"godl"* be drawn out into three and one-half quarters. Kipnis, correctly, allows only an eighth. The second part is treated even worse.

Chatskele, Chatskele. A very simple matter: the editor has destroyed the entire dance rhythm by substituting in the first note a quarter for a dotted eighth. Music is peculiar. The smallest detail can ruin it. One need only place the Kaufmann notation alongside Rubin's to get an idea of the liberties she has allowed herself with this song.

Of the mistakes in the text, let us consider only two: In her introduction to the section of children's songs, Miss Rubin offers us the historical information that in Eastern Europe a hundred years ago "A boy usually went to *cheder* until he was of marriageable age." Surely it would not be asking too much of a "treasurer" of Jewish folklore to be able to distinguish between Yeshiva and *cheder.* And on page 124 Miss Rubin presents a song entitled, in large letters, *"Zayt Gezunterheyt."* In Yiddish or in any other language, this is an impossible construction. *"Gezunterheyt"* is an adverb, and *"zayt"* is the imperative of "to be." But the mistake reappears in several stanzas.

The book has one virtue—it is a beautiful production, and the illustrations are simple and charming. But of what value is the flask if the wine is sour?

HARRY COOPERSMITH'S *The Songs We Sing* is no better than the Rubin book. In his introduction the editor states that "this book is an attempt to meet those needs [of the school and community] by including sufficient and varied song material—old and new—for a six-year school curriculum, for the average home and community, and even, to some extent, for the performing artist and cantor." In quantity the book is most considerable: it contains every variety of Jewish, pseudo-Jewish, and some non-Jewish song, plus a host of illustrations. It is apparent that money, at least, was not spared to make "the poor country cousin" of world music presentable.

The compilers of such books obviously consider folk music "easy as pie." Let alone a songbook for children. The trite truth

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bears repeating: precisely in preparing material for the young, one must beware of offenses against style. Especially one must guard against the kind of condescension that conceives of the second-rate as being peculiarly appropriate for children's understanding. These children are the generation of tomorrow. If they accept these songs at all, they will hand them on just as they were taught them, so that in due time we can be practically assured of a completely corrupted Jewish folk music. In the past, the folk instinct of the Jewish people constituted a means of protection for its oral heritage of folklore and folk song. This living "folk-censor" has disappeared. Today, when we approach the important task of anthologizing our religious and folk music, we must weigh every note. Israeli composers have, in recent years, seen their work garbled and vulgarized; but they, at least, are still around to correct distortions. The dead are, alas, defenseless.

It would be a space-consuming task to detail all the shortcomings of this book. Here is a small sampling from the first four sections (all told there are twenty-five, each covering a different type of song).

Shabbat Kodesh. The very first song (by Harry Coopersmith) is characteristic of the stylish trend of giving preference at any cost to the major key—enough of *golus* plaintiveness! But this cheap little dance is not quite up to the task of obliterating the *golus*. If major it has to be—what magnificent melodies in this key are available to us among our traditional chants for Sabbath Eve! Even the least of them cannot be touched by the editor's own Sabbath jig.

L'ho Dodi. A fine piece by Ephros, and in perfect style. Having hit upon a decent song, why does the author give so little of it?

Shiru Ladonoi. This little Hasidic tune is treated outrageously, its first part in particular. Should the editor insist that he found it printed that way, the answer is that whoever first published it, killed it. This, after all, is not the first bad book.

En Kelohenu. This melody (to words from the liturgy) was sung in the Yiddish theater as part of the stage production of I. J. Singer's *Yoshe Kalb*. It was intended as a parody on Galician Hasidic expression and pronunciation. To characterize this as authentically Hasidic is, to put it mildly, ludicrous.

The sins of omission and commission indicated here are characteristic of the entire volume. In a few decades inferior song collections like this one will be approached seriously and with respect. An aura of authority and authenticity will envelop them. Some day a young musician may lose his way, stumble upon them, and be convinced that they are really—Jewish music.

By way of postscript. Quite another atmosphere comes to us from the pages of a third Jewish songbook, a collection of Hasidic melodies, *Nigunai Hasidai Habad* ("The Melodies of the Habad Hasidim"), published by "Nichoach" in Brooklyn.

In its outward appearance this book, it is true, cannot compete with the lavish volumes the buyers of Jewish songbooks have come to expect by now. No illustrations, not even the slightest sketch of a Hasid with *kapote* and *peyes*. No blurbs overflowing with the inevitable superlatives. As anyone can see, this modest paper-covered book has nothing to recommend it as a gift for the more ambitious Bar Mitzvah table. The accent is not on the external. However, as to the contents—they are all they ought to be.

Faced with the necessity of recording their oral tradition of Hasidic song, ten old-time Hasidim of the distinguished Habad sect, now residing here, gathered together for this purpose. The actual writing down of this music was done in a genuinely Hasidic manner: each of the ten men, from early childhood familiar with this melodic heritage, sang out the tune to be noted, precisely as he had heard it from the venerable Hasidim in the old country. After deliberation, the assembly, assisted by a cantor, decided upon the authentic version to be printed.

Thus the rescue of this heritage came—as in times past—from the traditional *tsen batlonim* (dwelling perennially within a Jewish community were ten righteous but unworldly men, considered good for nothing but things spiritual). From them one derives the hope that it might be possible even here and now to do for the body of Jewish music what these ten did for the melos of their Hasidic sect.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

HOW CHILDREN BECOME PREJUDICED

A Survey of Recent Studies

MIRIAM REIMANN

A GROUP of seven-year-olds at a progressive school were reporting what they had done over their Thanksgiving vacation. A dark-skinned Negro boy, one of the most popular children in the class, said he had gone to watch television at the home of his uncle, Jackie Robinson.

"That's impossible! His uncle can't be Jackie Robinson," a white boy shouts out.

"Why is it impossible?" the teacher asks.

"Because Jackie Robinson is colored!"

This seven-year-old already knew that "colored" meant something to the world, but it meant nothing concrete to him; and his bizarre confusion is typical of children's awareness of race. But his ability to use such general terms as "colored" will grow as he grows; in a year or so he will know that Jackie Robinson is colored, and that his schoolmate is colored, too. Whether he will also be "prejudiced" toward Jackie Robinson and his schoolmate, and just what his "prejudice" will consist of—these are more difficult questions.

In the last fifteen years, psychologists and sociologists have been exploring the origins and development of children's attitudes to "minority" groups. In the long run, sound intercultural education programs, designed to reduce prejudice and increase the rational acceptance of differences, will have to be built on such knowledge. But the results of research are now fragmentized into a great many articles published in scientific journals, much of it unknown to the thousands of teachers and community leaders concerned with developing intercultural education. Moreover, for all the effort so far expended, our knowledge is still very incomplete, and researchers' conclusions are, or appear to be, contradictory.

Four groups of questions are asked by those studying prejudice in children:

(1) At what age do signs of prejudice appear among children? Does prejudice increase or abate with age? And what are the usual manifestations of prejudice at various age levels?

(2) Is prejudice in children a social habit acquired from the culture, or is it largely a compensation for personal insecurity, springing from the needs and defects of the individual personality?

(3) What social experiences most affect children's group attitudes? The conscious lessons in tolerance of a teacher? The unconscious lessons of prejudiced parents and other adults? The unthinking remarks of other children? How does the child handle the contradictions between the viewpoints of teachers, parents, and other children?

(4) What can be done about children's prejudices? Does organized contact—in school or

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IN RECENT years, there has been much thought and discussion on the problem of meeting the impact of prejudice on children. The other side of the coin—the fact that children generally come across prejudice only when it has infected *other* children—has received less attention, but is possibly the root of the matter. Here MIRIAM REIMANN reviews a variety of social psychological studies that have considered the question of prejudice in children—its genesis, its causes, the way it gets expressed. Mrs. Reimann is a graduate of Barnard, and holds a master's degree from Columbia University. She has written a discussion guide on the general question of prejudice and children for the American Jewish Committee, and she is now working on a study of the problems of parents and children under different social orders.

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clubs—with members of minority groups prevent the acceptance of prejudiced stereotypes? What techniques might schools adopt for the prevention or elimination of childhood prejudices?

SOME answers to the first set of questions can be found in Bruno Lasker's *Race Attitudes in Children* (Holt, 1929), an impressive collection of anecdotal material and speculations about children, assembled from adults in all parts of the country. This book was not an attempt to "measure" childhood prejudice, nor even a proof of anything—except that children are prejudiced, and in many confused ways. From all parts of the country, from school teachers, parents, social workers, and group leaders, came reports and examples of prejudiced behavior.

Lasker's informants found evidence that children were aware of other groups, and prejudiced against them, as early as in the kindergarten years. (Many educators to whom I have talked still maintain that few children under eight or ten even recognize group or color differences. Lasker's conclusions, however, have been supported by the work of later investigators in the field, notably that of Radke, Davis, and Trager, discussed below. And what many adults take to be innocence on the part of young children may be rather a sophisticated reluctance to exhibit what is officially forbidden.) Lasker observed that what we might consider prejudice is variously signified in various age groups: "The small child is more apt to exhibit signs of fear, the child of early school age teasing and combativeness, either associated with or soon followed by a sense of ridicule—more amused than malicious—for strangers in appearance, language or manners. . . ."

Prejudiced attitudes, Lasker generalized, are not deliberately taught but are transmitted without conscious intention to the growing child by parents and other adults, and children. (Later, Eugene L. and Ruth E. Horowitz showed that the parents of prejudiced children in Tennessee specifically disclaimed teaching their children prejudice, and that older children denied their parents had had any role in forming their attitudes—"Development of Social Attitudes in Children," *Sociometry*, 1938.)

Indeed, it appeared to Lasker that prejudice flourished *despite* the formal ideology of racial equality fostered in many public schools. A Midwestern high school teacher, who is quoted often in the book, claimed that "it is quite practicable to eliminate race prejudice as an active force in school matters," but that even the complete absence of racial discrimination within the school had nothing to do with what the children did outside the school. Colored and white boys formed distinct groups on the street during the noon hours. "It is a question with me," this teacher concluded, "whether mixed education is likely to touch the social separation of the races." Another Midwestern teacher reported the same phenomenon in the primary grades. In their school games the children chose foreigners as partners as often as any others, but their choice of partners when they were unsupervised—while leaving the building or on the playground—was not so "democratic." Thus, even at the ages of five to eight, these children had learned the niceties characteristic of prejudiced but well-mannered adults.

Among adolescents, Lasker found that the split between "official" and actual behavior widened. On the one hand, adolescents have a deeper understanding of history and of the ideals of the American creed. On the other, their more conscious competitiveness in scholarship and in sports, and their awareness of the sexual implications of intergroup mixing, predispose them to greater prejudice.

Lasker observed, on the basis of this and other evidence, that it is questionable whether individual contacts with members of other groups effectively offset other, prejudice-forming, influences. And if they don't, "it is hardly worthwhile to engineer such contacts." The public school system is commonly supposed to be America's great democratizing influence. But clearly the unsegregated school is not the only or major influence shaping the child's attitudes on race. If Lasker's premise of the unconscious learning of prejudice is correct, one might have to borrow a concept from psychoanalysis and consider whether the best way to combat children's prejudices is not by revelation of the sources of their prejudices rather than simply by ideological counter-propaganda. Or perhaps we should look toward a change in the social situation that creates these attitudes.

DR. LASKER'S book was frankly exploratory. A later attack on this problem concentrated on the question: how does the child reconcile conflicting influences? This study was R. D. Minard's *Race Attitudes of Iowa Children* (University of Iowa, 1931). Minard gave a verbal questionnaire to 1,641 Iowa children from

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grades seven to twelve. The questions asked were of two types: those requiring a judgment of the behavior of fictional persons, and those requiring the subject to indicate how he would act in hypothetical situations.

A typical question of the first category ran: "A young lady belonged to a sorority at a state university. There was a faint trace of Negro blood in her ancestry, although no one would ever have suspected the fact from her appearance, and the young lady was herself unaware of the fact. The truth was revealed by accident. After the discovery it was suggested that she resign from the sorority, and she did so. *Question:* Ought this young lady to have been asked to resign from the sorority?"

Questions of the second type inquired if the subject would just as soon have a trace of Negro blood that didn't show, or if the subject would just as soon marry a person who did have such a trace.

The interesting fact revealed in this study is that, as the children got older, their objective *judgments* of situations involving members of minority groups (that is, their answers to questions of the first type) became more tolerant, but their *personal responses* (that is, their answers to questions of the second type) indicated greater prejudice. Apparently their personal emotional responses were somehow immune to their intellectualized attitudes.*

WE CAN observe how the growing child's attitudes toward minority groups become immunized to official ideology by looking at another study, which tested the attitudes of some twelve-year-old children in Cincinnati in 1931, and retested them in succeeding years (Rose Zeligs, "Children's Intergroup Attitudes," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1948). Dr. Zeligs concluded that race and nationality prejudices seem to be supported and perpetuated by patterns and stereotypes "deeply ingrained in our children's social environment and . . . molding their attitude." It is especially interesting to observe in the following series of responses how one girl's prejudiced feelings were rationalized and reconciled with other conflicting feelings and opinions:

"*1931.* The Negro isn't of my race of people. Most of the time white people don't associate with Negroes. They are not clean. Some of the girls are rough and not careful when they play.

"1933. I don't like the Negro race. I know the ones in our school are awful wild. They are unclean, unpleasant race to have around.

"*1937.* In some respects I dislike the Negro intensely because of their unclean ways of living, and yet, at times I pity them because people are so prejudiced against them."

At the age of twelve, this girl gave as her first reason a strong ingroup feeling ("the Negro isn't of my race"); as her second, social requirements ("white people don't associate with Negroes"); as her third, a popular stereotype ("they are not clean"); and finally, almost as an afterthought, her personal experience ("some of the girls are rough . . ."). At the age of fourteen, she raised her personal experience to first place. At the age of eighteen her childhood stereotypes remained in force, but she had developed some conflict about allowing them completely to dominate her, and we hear the echo of the conflict when her answer implies that unprejudiced views are supposed to be part of the "American way." This very awareness, however, permits her to remain prejudiced because she now feels she has taken the demands of tolerance into account. Her prejudice is legitimized by lip service to tolerance.

IN RECENT years the personalities of prejudiced and unprejudiced persons have been studied, and significant correlations between personality and prejudice have been found. The most intensive study on this subject was done by a research group at the University of California at Berkeley, whose work on adults is reported in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Harper, 1950). One of the authors of this

*This study—and indeed, almost all those we will report upon—may raise in the reader's mind the serious question as to how one can distinguish *discriminating* behavior (rationally motivated) in reference to different ethnic groups from *prejudice* (motivated by emotional bias). For example, if a young person is realistically aware that friendships with Negroes will lead to "trouble" with his family or hamper his success, and therefore does not become friendly with Negroes—is this prejudice? All of these studies take it for granted that any expressions indicating that one would treat Negroes differently, or that one accepts a common view ("stereotype") of Negroes, are expressions of prejudice. It is possible these may simply be means of accommodation to an environment which makes truly non-discriminatory behavior towards Negroes almost impossible. The writer believes that the measures of "prejudice" usually resorted to in psychological studies really do measure prejudice and not this realistic type of "discriminating" behavior; yet it is perhaps worthwhile to raise this question in the reader's mind.

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work, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, also studied a group of children aged eleven to sixteen ("A Study of Prejudice in Children," *Human Relations*, 1948). And for this group, too, she found that prejudice is not an isolated sentiment but part of a complex of attitudes toward men and society; and that this general complex is in turn related to the whole emotional orientation of the individual.

Fifteen hundred children were presented with a series of about fifty slogans relating to race attitudes as well as to more general social attitudes, and on the basis of their scores were divided into an upper 25 per cent of children considered "unprejudiced" or "liberal," and a lower 25 per cent considered "prejudiced" or, in the researcher's term, "ethnocentric."

The prejudiced children tended to have what might be called a conservative and self-oriented attitude toward society. For example, answering the questions, "What is wrong with America today, and how would you change America?" ethnocentric children gave such answers as:

"Taxes on everything, and the cost of living."

"Clean up the streets—all that garbage lying around! See that everything is in order."

The unprejudiced children, on the other hand, mentioned the "atomic bomb, the condition of the Negroes in the South, the need for world peace," and so on.

Ethnocentric children tended also to be conservative in their attitudes toward the roles of the sexes in society. Prejudiced girls and boys both tended to agree that "girls should only learn things that are useful around the house." An ethnocentric girl said that when girls are around boys, they should "act like a lady, not like a bunch of hoodlums. Girls should not ask boys to date. It's not ladylike." Ethnocentric children placed a high premium on good manners, order, social approval, cleanliness. The stress on social approval and on power converge to produce an attitude of awe toward money, which is considered as having an exaggerated power for good or evil. A typical comment of a prejudiced child was: "No dollar, no friend; have a dollar, got a friend"; and the reverse of the coin: "It [money] helps make enemies. Money is the root of all evil, they say."

The prejudiced children's aversion to weakness extended to those who have power over them, their parents and their teachers, from whom they demand harsh discipline and punishment for misdemeanors and failures. "For what should the hardest punishment be administered?" elicited the following replies from some of them:

"Naturally for murder, the next is for not paying attention to her mother and father. She should be sent to a juvenile home for not paying attention to her parents."

"Talking back, not minding; for example, if you are supposed to saw a certain amount of wood in one hour and don't do it you should be punished for it."

The ethnocentric children looked toward their parents as a source of power rather than of love. Liberal children stressed a comradely relationship to their parents.

In short, Dr. Frenkel-Brunswik concludes that the attitudes of ethnocentric children are outgrowths of their central personality, and indeed of the type of personality depicted (in adults) in *The Authoritarian Personality*—though in general it is less firmly established. Their prejudice stems from their effort toward rigid conformity to what they conceive to be the values of awe-inspiring and authoritarian figures. Their rigid conformism obstructs a flexible social attitude, and facilitates the acceptance of black-or-white group stereotypes, particularly those they see dominant in society.

This analysis applies only to the extremely prejudiced children on the one hand, and those most free of prejudice on the other. We should realize there has been no such exhaustive inquiry into the personalities and attitudes of the large group that falls into neither the upper nor the lower quarters, but is in the middle ground comprising 50 per cent of the children (although a study by Milton Rokeach, "Generalized Mental Rigidity as a Factor in Ethnocentrism," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 1948, found a positive correlation among the entire population studied between prejudice and general mental rigidity). Conceivably, the study of milder prejudices might not reveal this psychological pattern linked with prejudice.

The conclusions to be drawn from the University of California study might indicate that the ethnocentric person requires psychotherapy for his prejudices. Other studies, however, suggest that the milder prejudices of children, as seen in verbal expressions and behavior, can be modified by a less intensive attack.

Virginia M. Axline ("Play Therapy and Race Conflict in Young Children," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1948) has presented an extremely interesting report on a play

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therapy course conducted with four seven-year-old public school children, one of whom was colored. The children were what was formerly called "bad," now "disturbed," and were taken for a one-hour session once a week to a room for non-directed therapy under a trained therapist. The atmosphere was completely "permissive"—no behavior was prohibited except direct physical violence against persons.

The race problem came up five times, and did not arise at all during the last five meetings. Miss Axline reports the children's statements and actions in stenographic detail, and we see how the immediate hurt reaction of a Negro girl to verbal attacks by one of the boys eventually leads him to try to make amends. Miss Axline's conclusion was: "When one provides a situation wherein the children are given an opportunity to be themselves—and an opportunity to react in a very permissive situation, then it seems that they can more readily come to terms with their own attitudes and emotions; and in a face-to-face situation . . . they *can* and *do* assume responsibility for their attitudes. . . ."

But most children rarely if ever have the "opportunity to react" provided by the completely permissive situation of play therapy. It is a delicate task to elicit frank and uninhibited responses from children on a subject that is as embarrassing and taboo to them as sex used to be. To meet this problem, many psychologists have employed rather subtle and indirect approaches to the study of race attitudes.

Eugene Horowitz ("The Development of Attitude toward the Negro," *Archives of Psychology*, 1936) showed pictures of white and colored faces to comparable groups of New York City and Southern schoolboys and asked the subjects which they preferred: "Show me which you like best; show me which you would like to live next door to you," and so on. He found a continuous development of prejudice from year to year, but no significant differences in prejudice scores between the Northern and Southern groups, and no evident correlation of prejudice with the amount of contact by white subjects with Negro schoolmates. Among the groups tested was a class which had a very popular Negro boy in it, and several other classes in mixed public schools, but these did not diverge from the general results obtained. The only radically divergent results were found in a group of boys attending a Communist settlement house in New York, who showed no prejudice and possibly a slight pro-Negro bias.

Two years later, E. L. and R. E. Horowitz ("Development of Social Attitudes in Children," *Sociometry*, 1938) conducted another "show-me" study among Tennessee boys and girls, but this time pictures of both sexes as well as both races were shown. To these children, race was a more important factor than sex in their choices; that is, a white boy, presented with a picture of a white girl and a colored boy, would be more likely to prefer the white girl, although in tests (written tests requiring the subject to state whom he would prefer to sit next to) given in Northern communities, sex had been found more important than race in comparable age groups. In other words, among Northern children one's own sex is preferred to one's own race; among Southern children, one's own race is preferred to one's own sex.

The Horowitzes suggested ("Race Attitudes," in *Characteristics of the American Negro*, ed. Otto Klineberg, Harper, 1948) that while his earlier study indicates there is no apparent difference between Northern and Southern children in the prevalence of anti-Negro prejudice in the population, his later one suggests that there is a difference in the relative *weight* of prejudice in relation to other factors.

SUMMARIZING the results of the studies reported to this point, it would appear that the questions asked at the beginning of the article might be answered in the following way:

(1) Prejudice appears during early childhood, perhaps in the pre-school years, and increases with advancing age (Lasker, Minard).

(2) Prejudice seems to be instilled by the unconscious example or teaching of the social environment formed by parents, adults, and other children (Lasker and E. L. and R. E. Horowitz, 1938).

(3) Prejudice is closely tied to the basic personality of the individual (Frenkel-Brunswik).

(4) Prejudice is on the whole stronger than the counter-propaganda of democratic teachers and the influence of democratic ideology, and becomes more organized and more rigid as the child grows older (Minard, Zeligs, Horowitz). Further, prejudice does not seem to be closely dependent on personal contact with members of minority groups, for whether we study children in the North or South, or children in segregated or unsegregated classes, the pattern of prejudice is more or less the same (Horowitz).

What is implied for the educator by these theories of the source of childhood preju-

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dices? The implications of Frenkel-Brunswik's personality-and-prejudice correlation might be that the educator is powerless to alter the consequences of unsound parent-child relationships. Another study, which adheres more closely to the social-influences line of Lasker, Horowitz, and Zeligs, however, has a more hopeful view, and offers positive suggestions for possible educational techniques to deal with children's prejudices. This is the study of Marian Radke, Helen Trager, and Hadassah Davis, conducted under the auspices of the Bureau for Intercultural Education ("Social Perceptions and Attitudes of Children," *Genetic Psychology Monograph Series*, 1949). The conclusions in regard to personality and prejudice made by these authors are directly opposed to those of Frenkel-Brunswik: ". . . conformity to environmental standards and expectations rather than individual securities or insecurities would appear to be the root of the child's earliest content and valences for social groups. . . ."

Radke, Trager, and Davis presented two hundred and fifty Philadelphia school children, aged five to eight, with a series of eight pictures about which they were asked to make up stories and express attitudes. In one picture, for example, a colored child is seen standing aside from a group of white children playing together. In another, two boys are seen emerging from a synagogue, while four boys stand down the street watching them. The premise of the test is that the subjects project their own feelings and attitudes in discussing the pictures.

Many subjects at the beginning of the interview were uneasy and seemed to wish to avoid the questions of race and religion, but became actively interested when confidence in the interviewer was established. Reserve and conflict were particularly apparent among the Negro children tested; at one moment, they rejected the white group and at the next rejected their own. Jewish children valued their own group much higher than did Negro children, and expressed their valuations more emphatically than did Christian whites; they also referred to their group more frequently than did children of other groups, and almost half of the Jewish children projected "Jewish" into pictures where there was no such identification by the tester.

The study found an increase, with age, in the percentage of children expressing prejudice and showing an awareness of group tensions. The presence or absence of minority groups in the subjects' neighborhood or school had little effect on their attitudes. The authors concluded that it was not contact with minorities, but *contact with prevailing social attitudes* toward minorities, that was the foundation for prejudice.

Radke, Davis, and Trager found in the children's early inhibitions and later eagerness in regard to race discussions a clue to the kind of pedagogy required. Their fears, fantasies, curiosities, and misconceptions must not be suppressed but openly discussed. "A rule of silence about differences," they wrote, "not only fails the child in not helping him to achieve a better understanding . . . but the silence may also be perceived by the child as tacit agreement with societal prejudices." The authors also argued that the specific problems of prejudice which the child meets in his school, his neighborhood, and his home must be discussed frankly. The successes of the play therapy course by Axline reported above would seem to support such a program.

The author's own inquiries into New York City educators' attitudes toward intercultural education indicate that these suggestions are not widely followed. Whether because of fear of antagonizing some members of the adult community or because of the theory that such discussions only aggravate children's prejudices, many educators carefully refrain from mentioning to the children that there are significant differences among various groups, that there is some degree of prejudice in almost every community and institution in the nation, and that the children themselves are frequently the objects or the subjects (or both) of prejudice. In many schools there seems to prevail a kind of liberal over-optimism that may be as ineffectual in intercultural education as a reactionary fatalism. The ignoring of differences is expected to lead to the early disappearance of all the problems they create. In effect, the children are told there is no real problem, at least not where they are concerned —whereas, as a matter of fact, there is.

THE Philadelphia experimenters concluded that prejudice is largely a matter of social imposition upon the individual; the California group, as we saw, held that it is a response of the individual personality to inadequate social and emotional satisfactions. Both studies were carefully conducted and in neither does it appear that there were unwarranted generalizations of the empirical conclusions.

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However, there is one way of reconciling the apparent contradictions of the California and Philadelphia studies while accepting their results. There is within our society a very wide range offered to the individual between tolerance and prejudice. He may choose any one of a number of positions, or several positions simultaneously or successively, without departing from what is regarded as the cultural norm. The "normally" prejudiced person accepts and perpetuates on the one hand a formal ideology of tolerance ("live and let live, equal opportunities for all, the American creed") and, on the other, a fluctuating set of invidious stereotypes. Which social attitudes he will accept as his own depends on personal as well as social factors. And within the "normal" range of prejudice and tolerance, it is probably not easy to distinguish the personality elements from the complicated interplay of social influences.

Thus for any random population—and such a random population was studied in the Philadelphia research—it is not easy to find a correlation between personality factors and prejudice. Most people will indeed pick it up "out of the air," from the "social atmosphere." And for these people, their prejudices will be virulent or mild, as the situation demands. But those persons who have really developed the kind of personality that *requires* prejudice to balance it —that is, the authoritarian personality—will develop more consistent and perhaps more violent attitudes, and will show up in studies as extremely prejudiced. Consequently, when we approach the limits of the scale of prejudice, we will find personality and prejudice linked together. From this point of view, the "liberal" child and the "ethnocentric" child, as they appear in Dr. Frenkel-Brunswik's study, are deviants from a norm of mild prejudice, since the completely secure and loving family held responsible for the former, the completely unprejudiced child, is probably as rare in our society as the completely hostile and rejecting family that is believed to produce the latter.

WHETHER "normally prejudiced" children can be taught finally to resolve the conflicts between a formal creed of tolerance and stereotyped prejudicial attitudes in favor of the former, is a question that educators like to answer in the affirmative, but that psychologists have not answered at all—unless we take their more general comments on attitudes. Thus, Gordon Allport writes ("Attitudes," in *A Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Carl Murchison, Clark University Press, 1935): "An attitude seldom contains all of the experience which is relevant to it, and seldom changes as rapidly as a faithful following of experience would require. . . . Because they save both time and effort, stereotyped attitudes offer great resistance to change. They resist the inroads of new contradictory experience and are retained as long as they satisfy and protect the individual."

In such a situation, what is the value of intercultural education, and what type of formal education is most valuable? To my knowledge, no follow-up tests have been made on children subjected to the various programs of intercultural education. The employment of such projective techniques as those used by Radke, Davis, and Trager, on a before-and-after basis, would seem to be an excellent means of testing the effectiveness of different pedagogical procedures—including the one suggested by these authors.

The subject of children's prejudices is also deficient in another type of study—one that would consider it in a non-laboratory atmosphere, in the ordinary relations of social life, in terms of *social behavior* (physical and verbal) rather than *verbalization*, i.e., the individual's report on his behavior. The laboratory emphasis may be responsible for the fact that more general social and economic causes of prejudices have only rarely been considered.

While a few studies have failed to discover any simple correlation between economic status and prejudice, no studies—that is, in the sphere of children's prejudices—have been made on the relation of change in economic status, and particularly loss of economic security, to prejudice. Indeed, the whole larger social background of prejudice—in the school, on the street, at home —is often filled in rather shallowly, if at all, in these studies. Yet many students believe that it is only in a time of economic crisis and general insecurity that prejudice becomes dangerous. A long-term study of the relation between economic factors and prejudice might give us some insight into the dynamics of the frightening shifts we have witnessed in our time from a relatively tolerant to a violently discriminatory social atmosphere. The fragmentary research we have summarized in this article will go on, we may hope, to fill in this social and economic setting.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Does Psychoanalysis Cure?

To the Editor of Commentary:

The article "Does Psychoanalysis Cure?" by Lillian Blumberg, in the November Commentary, is open to several criticisms. First, the article is misleading. The impression conveyed to the reader, whether intentionally or not, is that present-day psychoanalysis is confronted with a crisis arising out of the fact that analysts are failing to cure their patients. . . . As one of my own patients said, "One gathers from the article that very few patients are really helped." Moreover, Miss Blumberg implies that this failing is peculiar to psychoanalysis, or at least that the results of analysis are no better than those obtained by "shorter and less expensive methods of standard psychiatry." What these "shorter and less expensive methods of standard psychiatry" are Miss Blumberg fails to tell us. Nor is it clear how a method of treatment in psychiatry can get to be considered standard. Actually, the criteria for diagnosis, prognosis, and improvement are no more obscure in the practice of psychoanalysis than in any other psychiatric procedure and the failing is not one of psychoanalysis but of psychiatry in general. . . .

Another bogey Miss Blumberg resuscitates is the cry: "They are doing research on the patients!" This is a complaint frequently leveled at every doctor, no matter what kind of medicine he practices. . . . Miss Blumberg complains that the temptation to use the patient as a "guinea pig" is one of the hazards peculiar to psychoanalysis. I think everybody may be assured that this hazard is less likely to be encountered in psychoanalysis than in any other medical treatment: it is difficult, if not impossible, to conduct an analysis properly while distorting it for some ulterior motive.

Second, Miss Blumberg's article is pretentious and pseudo-scientific. It pretends to be a scholarly paper based upon a large number of authentic sources. But I think that Miss Blumberg's principal sources, Doctors Oberndorf, Kubie, and Greenacre, would agree that their contributions to the subject of cure in psychoanalysis are dwarfed by the fundamental survey of the whole problem published by Freud in 1947, under the title "Analysis, Terminable and Interminable." The material upon which Miss Blumberg bases her article can be considered only as addenda and appendices to this paper which Miss Blumberg ignores entirely. Some of Miss Blumberg's quotations simulate genuine scholarship. However, one wonders what the point is of making the statement that "Herman Nunberg says that analysis can only bring relative changes that involve quantitative differences" without first understanding that Dr. Nunberg, who in this case is simply quoting Freud and not offering an original formulation, considers that neurotic illness is essentially a matter of quantitative shifts. Many of the other quotations are similarly left hanging.

Third, it is presumptuous of a popular journal such as Commentary to publish material dealing with the technical aspects and problems of medical treatment. . . . I don't think Commentary would be sufficiently presumptuous to publish a discussion of the relative merits of electric shock therapy versus insulin shock therapy, lobotomy versus topectomy, or the trans-sphenoidal approach versus the sub-frontal approach for operation in cases of suprasellar tumors. Even assuming that the writer of an article on one of these subjects were fully competent and informed, the decisions are not those for the layman to make and must be left to his medical consultant. . . .

Freud, in his introduction to *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, states: "The teachings of psychoanalysis are based upon an incalculable number of observations and experiences, and one who has not repeated those observations upon himself or upon others is not in a position to arrive at an independent judgment of it." In the brief listing of Miss Blumberg's qualifications which accompanies her article, I saw none which would exempt her from Freud's requirement. She reveals her incompetence by quoting a paragraph from a theoretical paper by Jekels and Bergler, which she finds incomprehensible. . . . If one were to quote to Miss Blumberg a similar paragraph from the *Journal of Neurophysiology* she would find it, I believe, equally incomprehensible. But I don't think she would assume that her inability to understand it renders it absurd. Why is it assumed that psychoanalysis is not a technical

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subject and is within everyone's competence without special training? If Miss Blumberg does not have sufficient knowledge about psychoanalysis to be able to understand the paragraph she quoted, she certainly has no right to comment publicly. . . .

MORTIMER OSTOW, M.D.

New York City

Miss Blumberg Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I regret that Dr. Ostow has chosen to attack my competence rather than the questions raised in my article. However:

1. The "crisis" arising out of the fact that psychoanalysts fail to cure many of their patients was not implied by me but by the psychoanalytic sources I cited. Dr. Ostow has not offered any evidence that such a "crisis" does not exist. In my opinion it hardly constitutes a defense of psychoanalysis to state that "the failing is not one of psychoanalysis but of psychiatry in general." Psychoanalysts have often justified the costliness and duration of their treatment on the grounds of its superior effectiveness.

2. Dr. Ostow has sadly distorted my point about research. I do not object to psychoanalytic research but to the fact that patients have to pay for it. (And *are* they informed that they are being used as "guinea pigs"?) And he is perhaps too sanguine about the small likelihood of distorting an individual analysis for the sake of ends that are not the patient's. Psychoanalysts are, after all, human and subject to error.

3. The reference to Dr. Nunberg was one of a series of statements that I juxtaposed to illustrate the disagreement among psychoanalysts on the concept of the normal personality and the goal of psychoanalytic treatment. It was not my intention to assess any of the various viewpoints.

4. Dr. Ostow is surely aware that the use of shock techniques and lobotomy is one of the most controversial issues in medicine, not only for practical reasons but because of the ethical questions involved. The public might very properly be concerned about this. As to Dr. Ostow's contention that the doctor should make the final decision on the use of any medical treatment, it has always been my impression that the final decision belongs to the patient or his family.

5. The passage I quoted from the Jekels-Bergler paper is not terminologically but *rationally* incomprehensible, and I would personally not care to have to defend its theoretical logic. It is too bad Dr. Ostow did not favor us with a translation of the passage into English.

I'm sorry Dr. Ostow feels that I've defiled the temple, but I cannot agree with him that only psychoanalysts may discuss psychoanalysis —there are too many non-psychoanalytic issues involved. And anyway, distance sometimes lends disenchantment. Would Dr. Ostow maintain that only priests may discuss Catholicism?

LILLIAN BLUMBERG

New York City

Another Doctor's View

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I consider Lillian Blumberg's article "Does Psychoanalysis Cure?" a very penetrating piece of work, and have already showed it to several people in the field. . . .

H. SHATAN, M.D.

Hillside Hospital
Bellerose, Long Island

Rosenzweig and Hirsch

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Will Herberg's valuable article on Franz Rosenzweig (COMMENTARY, December 1950) requires correction on one point. "Rosenzweig's teaching on Christianity," he writes, "is the first, and remains the only serious, attempt to develop a Jewish theological framework in which the two religions will be seen in their relation to God's providential plan for the salvation of mankind." The fact is that a view very similar to that propounded by Rosenzweig was set forth by Rabbi Samuel Hirsch in his extraordinary *Religionsphilosophie der Juden* (1842). Judaism, he held, is active religion in its intensive, Christianity in its extensive, form. It is the function of Judaism to conserve the truth of human freedom under God; Christianity is to bring this truth to mankind. Though Hirsch was a Hegelian, whereas Rosenzweig owed much to Kierkegaard, the critic of Hegel, the two German thinkers seem to be at one in their interpretation of the unique role of Christianity in the Jewish scheme of salvation. It should be noted further that though Hirsch became one of the most radical Reformers, he was still a loyal champion of Orthodoxy when he published the *Religionsphilosophie*.

The medieval Jewish philosophers regarded both Christianity and Islam as channels whereby the divine revelation in Israel might reach the heathen world. This was also the view of Hirsch's contemporary, Salomon Formstecher. More recent liberal religionists have generally sought to appreciate the spiritual values in all religious experience. Hirsch, however, included Hinduism and Buddhism among the

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pagan faiths, and disregarded Islam altogether.

I have made this point in the interest of historical accuracy, not because I think it adds to the glory of Hirsch. The fact that several of the Jewish "Existentialists" have adopted a view which regards Christianity as a "counterpart" of Judaism, as "in full truth revealed," "divinely ordained," seems to me good reason for reexamining their doctrine with the most critical scrutiny, not to say suspicion. I make this statement with full awareness of the great service these thinkers have rendered, and with nothing but reverence for the memory of Rosenzweig.

RABBI BERNARD J. BAMBERGER
West End Synagogue
New York City

The Battle of Scarsdale

TO THE EDITORS OF COMMENTARY:

Naturally I was greatly interested in the story by Robert Shaplen [in the December COMMENTARY] on the Battle of Books in Scarsdale. I have no useful comment to make except that I hope many another community responds to the professional hysterical with the patience, intelligence, and conviction shown by the people of the Scarsdale community.

I do not deserve much credit for my part in the initial stages of the drama, since I have been so erroneously reported. Notwithstanding the smears and lies to the contrary, and the patriotic operations of J. Parnell Thomas and Joe McCarthy, I am not a radical. I am not a member of any of the officially proscribed organizations. I was not even a member of the Progressive party, and do not personally know a single American Communist. I have been introduced to Howard Fast and Paul Robeson, but with neither of them have I carried on conversation. I do confess to being a political Independent, and will not hush or readily run to cover when minorities are being persecuted, or American rights violated by patrioteers. Sometimes it is the fate of a political Independent that he is booted from behind, while his teeth are pushed in from the front.

Scarsdale gives me hope that in some American communities the head will be used in handling civic issues instead of the spleen. It may be safe and even creditable again for Americans to practice humanitarian professions, like assisting refugees from totalitarian states and befriending oppressed minorities; protesting a war-making foreign policy may be tolerated. Those are my crimes, along with objecting to the "policy of containment" which appears responsible for our present crisis.

But, as I say, my credit for initially annoying the Scarsdale culture cleaners is hardly merited. Voting for a scientific friend of twenty years acquaintance, namely, Mr. Wallace, is one of my lesser sins. Hardly good enough for a trigger action; certainly not enough to justify book-burning.

HARLOW SHAPLEY
Harvard College Observatory
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Please accept my congratulations on the article on the Scarsdale censorship case. Robert Shaplen has done a wonderful job, and it deserves wide reading. . . .

DAVID K. BERNINGHAUSEN, Chairman
Committee on Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Shaplen has written a fine article. . . .

A. M. SCHLESINGER
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Crossman on the Germans

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I greatly enjoyed Richard Crossman's article "No German Rearming Without Atlantic Union," in the December COMMENTARY. I enjoyed it first because I am an enthusiast for Atlantic Union, and also because in my reading on the subject of Israel, I thought Crossman's book was a magnificent job of scholarly detachment and objectivity. . . . He has brought the same great talents to bear on the new subject of Germany. I am happy that his article is reaching the important audience you serve.

W. L. WHITE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard H. S. Crossman writes in COMMENTARY (December 1950): "Everyone now accepts Goethe's dictum that two souls dwell in the German breast." But Goethe never made such a "dictum." What Mr. Crossman quotes is from the first part of *Faust*, where Faust says, "Two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast"—the mundane soul and the divine soul, as he goes on to explain. This was said by Faust about *himself*. If, as this 20th century seems to insist, every personal and individual thought has to be "typical" or at least "allegorical" of some total "group," then Faust's statement stands for Man rather than for "the Germans."

NORBERT MUHLEN
New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Idolatry of the Common Man

THE NEW IMAGE OF THE COMMON MAN. By CARL J. FRIEDRICH. Beacon Press. 382 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by MAX BELOFF

THE present book consists mainly of a reprint of Professor Friedrich's *The New Belief in the Common Man,* originally published in 1942, to which has been added a prologue and an epilogue that reassert the validity of his "common man" philosophy against the believers in "cultural elites" and the totalitarian protagonists of "mass man."

Professor Friedrich is not alone in his desire to provide some acceptable reinterpretation of democracy and its postulates, one less vulnerable than its predecessors to charges of a false rationalism. And in his discussion, which ranges far and wide and is replete with references to many branches of contemporary and earlier social thought, Professor Friedrich shows himself fully aware of the many-sidedness of the concept he is thus trying to redefine. But I found the book, on the whole, profoundly unsatisfactory, a reaction not, I hope, dictated by what I find antipathetic in Professor Friedrich's style—a succession of staccato assertions that beat upon the ear like the patter of hail upon a tin roof. The succession of headings (I had almost written "headlines") within each chapter do not so much sign-post the argument as break it up. What one gets is a series of isolated reactions to things or ideas that stimulate the reader into agreement or dissent. Since the "common man" gets most of his mental pabulum in this form, Professor Friedrich may well feel that this way of writing might bring his book a wider audience—but it hardly seems appropriate for a Harvard professor of government to address any audience in this fashion. When one is endeavoring to inculcate, among other things, a greater respect for accurate thinking on political issues, a reverence for the traditions of argument in prose would not come amiss.

But, as I say, one might surmount even this awkward hurdle if what lay beyond was a new idea as original and important as Professor Friedrich believes his "image of the common man" to be. "I know whereof I speak," he says, "for I myself have been converted in these past twenty years to a belief in the common man, after being surrounded by a belief in the elite." But Professor Friedrich's rejection of the authoritarian beliefs of his original German environment does not seem to have implied in fact the working out of a new democratic theory of politics. His book is, rather, a tribute to a phenomenon which is, by American standards, of a respectable antiquity—the assimilative powers of Jacksonian democracy. Almost without being aware of it, Professor Friedrich has acquired the whole set of assumptions about man in society upon which the Jacksonian case was, and is, based, and his own contribution is little more than a slightly eccentric terminology.

INDEED there is nowhere in the book any attempt to prove that the rule of the "common man" is in itself possible or desirable. That is taken for granted. What Professor Friedrich does is to take "democracy" as given, and look for better arguments with which to defend it, much as a medieval schoolman would use reason to defend the truths that revelation made certain. "What we need is the belief that the mass of common men are, in the long run, less likely to be wrong than the individual judgment of any superman, or the limited judgment of any self-appointed elite." Why do we *need* this belief? Either it is true and Professor Friedrich can convince us of it; or it is not true, and we do not need it. At no point does Professor Friedrich discuss any of those questions revolving round the use of scarce resources (the age-old "guns versus butter" problem) which make up the actual content of politics, and endeavor to see in what way the judgment of the "common man" can best be applied to them, or how often that judgment is likely to be right or how it ought to be regarded. Nor does he assist himself by a curiously eclectic and unsatisfac-

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tory use of historical fact and historical personages; Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson had few things in common—but one of these things, surely, was a quite definite belief in the importance of social leadership and something less than patience with the hesitancies and prejudices of the common man. To make a democrat in this sense of Thomas Jefferson is a rare example of an ability to fly in the face of recorded fact.

Nor can Professor Friedrich be allowed to get away from facing a truth that he can hardly help observing; namely, that the "common man" is not at his best in dealing with foreign affairs. "A democracy should strictly speaking have no *foreign* policy. . . . Only after a world government has been brought into existence, and the functions of worldwide scope have been assigned to that organization, will the common man as world citizen be able to function effectively." As Professor Friedrich recognizes in his epilogue, that happy day is far off—nor will its coming be hastened by such discredited and discreditable nostrums as that of a neutral "third force" in Western Europe, which seems to possess some attraction for him. But if the theory of the "common man" is not applicable to world affairs, if "the idea of rival states contending for their interests by the use of force is in conflict with the democratic principle," the "common man" might just as well give up altogether—since even in the United States it is now hard to think of a political issue without international implications.

To understand the root of all this confusion, one phrase already quoted is illuminating: "self-appointed elites"—why "self-appointed" unless to marshal prejudice?—and Professor Friedrich, who has some good things to say on propaganda elsewhere in the book, must be perfectly well aware of what he is about. Elites are not self-appointed; they are essential to any well-ordered society; if Professor Friedrich really dislikes "order" as a social ideal, let him look at Southeastern Asia suffering from the removal of part of its elites—though the example may hardly impress someone who can still talk in all seriousness about the "evil deeds" of the British in India. It is a British-trained elite that stands today between the sub-continent and its neighbors' anarchy.

Professor Friedrich's reply is that we have misconceived the "common man" in his political context. The "common man" is distinguished by his sense of workmanship, acquired in his own occupation, and transferable to other fields. "The common man, even in the aggregate, is not infallible; far from it. But he perceives more readily than the expert the general impact of proposed policies. The judgment of the common man in which we believe is a collective, not an individual judgment." But this is, of course, sheer Jacksonian mythology. The general effect of the operations of government are even less amenable to inexpert analysis than the ordinary processes of production. The individual worker is the best witness on the relation between his own wages and his standard of living and the best authority on how he should distribute his own purchasing power to give him the maximum satisfaction—and any attempts of bureaucracies or other elites to replace him in making such judgments should be resisted—but the general impact of a rise in wages, not to mention such controversial matters as the net effects of tariff or currency policies, do not respond to the simple test of being "workmanlike." The essence of politics is to harness the necessary specialism and inherited or acquired political capacities of elites to the needs of the community as a whole. It cannot be got round in so simple a fashion as the neo-Jacksonians imagine.

This summary may do an injustice to the book as a whole which has many passages of great interest, particularly on the fallacies of "progressive education" and the desirability of political and administrative devolution. But it lacks the hard core of a real sense of history and a real recognition of the compulsions of the present without which all political science is little more than day-dreaming of a rather dangerous kind.

America as Frankenstein

THE TWENTY-FIFTH HOUR. By C. VIRGIL GHEORGHIU. Knopf. 404 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by GOLO MANN

THE TWENTY-FIFTH HOUR comes to America heralded by a considerable European fame. This must be a result of the theme of the novel, its pretension, its vast gesture; it is not justified by what the book achieves.

The book begins as a realistic novel in the author's native Rumania; there, in the description of rugged peasant life, Gheorghiu is at his

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best. Johann Moritz, the peasant from Fontana, has a strength and innocence which are believable. His mother, Aristitza, is a figure of flesh and blood. The other principal characters, Alexandru Koruga, the Orthodox priest; Trajan Koruga, his novelist son; and Eleanora West, Trajan's wife, are not. They are wonderfully noble, wonderfully intellectual beings who from the first chapter on know everything, lecture each other and everybody else about Technological Civilization, Russia, Asia, America, the machine, the East, the West, quote T. S. Eliot and Count Keyserling, say long prayers by W. H. Auden which they seem to have memorized. Early in the book we learn that Trajan Koruga is working on a novel, *The Twenty-fifth Hour,* in which he will show that we have become the slaves of our slaves, the machines, that Technological Civilization is doomed and mankind beyond salvation. What happens to Trajan later can hardly surprise him or the reader, since it is the same thing that happens in the novel he is writing—a romantic trick that was a little stale when Gide used it in *The Counterfeiters.* And, to make absolutely sure that we understand the novel's title correctly, the Hungarian foreign minister, when asked by his son what time it is, answers significantly:

"'It is twenty-five o'clock.'—'I don't understand,' said Lucian.—'I can well believe it. No one wants to understand. It is the twenty-fifth hour—the "now" of European civilization.'"

Arthur Koestler's influence on Gheorghiu is unmistakable, especially in his torture scenes. There is also the influence of certain classical writers, especially Voltaire. Johann Moritz experiences the blessings of the 20th century with entire innocence and ignorance, as Candide did those of the 18th. As in *Candide,* Gheorghiu's figures meet time and again, under the most unbelievable circumstances. The dead reappear; the older Koruga, executed but not quite killed by the Bolsheviks, is revived—characteristically by the civilized and humane German army—so that he can meet his son and his former servant, Johann, in an American prison camp, and die again. The utterly improbable is legitimate in Voltaire's symbolic puppet show; in a realistic novel one does not quite know what to do with it.

THE adventures of Johann Moritz make up one of the central stories of the novel. He is sent to a labor camp in Rumania through the malice of a local gendarme, and through a misunderstanding is declared a Jew. He escapes to Hungary, is arrested and maltreated as a Rumanian spy, then sold to the Nazis as a slave laborer. In Germany he is forced to join the SS because of his "Nordic" looks, just in time to be captured by the Americans, who try him as a Nazi war criminal. He is released after thirteen years in Europe's concentration camps and prisons, but is presently rearrested as an Iron Curtain alien when the United States goes to war against Russia. Finally, he is allowed to join the volunteers who fight with the Americans against Communism and does so, but without enthusiasm, for by now he knows the world. The story of Johann Moritz is the most Voltairean, the most imaginative of the book. Moritz never lectures; things merely happen to him.

Unfortunately, the author was more interested in Trajan Koruga, who is a kind of idealized Virgil Gheorghiu: a Rumanian writer-diplomat who marries an intellectual Jewish lady and is therefore forced to leave Rumania. He manages for a while to keep his diplomatic job in Yugoslavia until the pro-German Croats intern him; is then swept into Czechoslovakia whence he flees westward with his wife to escape from the Russians and to meet the Americans. This brings us to the climax of the book, the real "twenty-fifth hour." The Americans treat Trajan and his wife not as friends but as Rumanian enemy aliens, and imprison them.

Perhaps I have become insensitive, but I find this rather trivial. It is the kind of stupidity inevitable in wartime; annoying for those to whom it happens but not to be inflated into a disaster of metaphysical proportions. Nor is it peculiar to the "twenty-fifth hour." When war broke out between Britain and France in 1804, Napoleon had all English tourists on French soil arrested without caring in the least whether they were pro- or anti-French at heart; and kept them, not for a few months, but for fully ten years. This reviewer happens to know a man—as a matter of fact, he knows him rather well—who got the bad idea of going to France during the "phony war" to join the French army. The French received him exactly as Major Brown receives Trajan Koruga (he had been born in Germany); this seemed to my friend idiotic, but not really of overwhelming significance, and after a few months he was released. So, it would seem, was Virgil Gheorghiu. The hero of *The Twenty-fifth Hour* cannot be released because he goes on a hunger strike and later—in an indirect way—commits suicide, not without some

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tearful monologues about Technological Civilization, the death of Europe, and his eyeglasses which remain his only property and through which he has already seen too much, far too much.

Modest in its true scope, the episode has to be adorned with all kinds of additional horrors, simplifications, and exaggerations. All American officers are good-for-nothings. The first, Major Brown, is an irascible and treacherous pedant without any understanding of Balkan politics. The second is a smug black-marketeer. The third, a Jew, insults Eleanora as a Nazi because she comes from Rumania.

Speaking of Jews, one cannot say they play a fortunate role in Mr. Gheorghiu's novel. There is Dr. Abramovici who flees with Moritz from Rumania to Budapest, then deserts him rather meanly to return to Germany as a pompous American army officer, delighting in the intricacies of military bureaucracy. There is Strul, another Jewish co-sufferer in Hungary, who does not want to recognize Moritz when he meets him again in American uniform. And there is Marcou Goldenberg, the intellectual Jew from Fontana, who is a vicious Communist from the start, commits murder in the Rumanian internment camp, is liberated by the Russians, and presently establishes a monstrous regime of terror and killing in his home village. Even that may have happened, once: the question is whether it is typical enough to find place in a novel. Perhaps the author wanted to show that Jews are caught in the trap of Technological Civilization as Gentiles are and that they are neither worse nor better than Gentiles. Perhaps he has tried just a little too hard.

THE main issue of the novel is "Western Technological Civilization," of which both Russia and the United States are instrumentalities. As Eleanora Koruga explains to Lieutenant Lewis in one of her last lectures: "Russia, since the Communist Revolution, has become the most advanced branch of Western Technological Civilization. It has taken up all the theories of the West and put them into practice." The Third World War, then, is "a clash between two categories of robots, each dragging in its wake a trail of slaves of flesh and blood."

But this is only one aspect of the matter. In the second half of the book, after the Korugas meet Major Brown, a somewhat different issue comes more and more into focus: the cultural and psychological differences, indeed the conflict, between America and Europe. The "epilogue," placed after the beginning of the Third World War, is almost dominated by it.

"Lieutenant Lewis rubbed his hands. '. . . Victory is already ours. The whole world will be civilized. There will be no more wars, only progress, prosperity, and comfort.' Nora smiled."

It is the bitter smile of cultured, human, knowing, and desperate Europe which is faced with the brutal, ignorant optimism of the American robot man. Shortly before, the Lieutenant, straddling his chair, a cigarette dangling from his lips, had asked Eleonora to marry him and Trajan's widow had refused because of their difference of age. Not personal age—she is a year younger than he is; but, you see, Europe is so much older than America. How could a woman who has been loved by Petrarch and Goethe and Byron and Pushkin, who has seen knights and troubadours kneeling before her, take seriously the robot man's insolent proposal? It is an effective scene; but the effect, like most of the novel's effects, is reached with cheap, self-defeating means. Self-defeating—for if this is one of Europe's great novels, gravely discussed at the Sorbonne, if this artless confusion of styles, this monotony of horrors, these crude exaggerations, these naively didactic perorations, do really satisfy the European literary taste, then Europe's culture, to say the least, is not so very superior to the American.

The psychological relations between the new American super-power and the ancient and proud but terribly weakened nations of Europe are bound to be delicate at best. The traditional simplification of American foreign policy may help little to improve them. But exactly because the problem is both vital and delicate it should not be dealt with in a caricaturing, demagogic fashion. Lieutenant Lewis makes Eleonora's European superiority all too obvious, all too easily won.

Too obvious, too easy—that is the failure of *The Twenty-fifth Hour*. Virgil Gheorghiu may not be lacking in good will or in industry. But he has chosen a very great subject matter; and a great subject takes a great writer. Our modern age has not yet the historical reality which springs from a long past: that undoubted continuity which made it possible to describe the society of Balzac's France or to parody the society of Gogol's Russia. Things without precedent, without name, have happened and are happening; extremes of crime and stupidity from which good writers are tempted to turn away

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because they have nothing useful to say about them. Still, we have other direct attempts to spell out the full experience of the 1940's; to compare them with *The Twenty-fifth Hour* would be a lack of charity.

Our Still Unwritten Past

PILGRIM PEOPLE. By ANITA LIBMAN LEBESON. Harper. 624 pp. $6.00.

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1654-1875. Edited with notes and introduction by MORRIS U. SCHAPPES. Preface by Joshua Bloch. Citadel Press. 762 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by OSCAR HANDLIN

BY COMMON acceptance, Jewish history begins in the United States with the landing of the first handful of Jews in New Amsterdam in 1654. As the 300th anniversary of that event approaches, its significance will undoubtedly grow larger in our consciousness; and we may expect a flurry of new books to mark the occasion.

Even in the absence of an anniversary, the need for a fresh consideration of American Jewish history would still be critical. Students of American culture have for years sensed the inadequacy of their information about the role of the Jews in that culture, and the Jews themselves have increasingly become aware that the qualities of self-understanding that may come from a comprehension of the past are essential to a satisfactory adjustment to the present.

Unhappily, it is not likely that either of the books before us will add much to that understanding. The two differ sharply in method, in approach, and in point of view, but not, ultimately, in the conception of their subject matter. It is as if the oft-repeated platitudes about Jews in America are so familiar and make so few demands upon the critical intelligence of either reader or author that they may be made to convey the most arbitrary meaning, or indeed, they may be repeated as if they had no meaning at all.

MRS. LEBESON'S book presents a running survey of the history of the Jews from the Portuguese and Spanish background of the discovery of America to the present. Although her own researches have added a few details that have some novelty, her story follows the tried patterns of past writing on the subject, and her sources are largely those so often exploited in the publications of the American Jewish Historical Society.

The errors of fact in Mrs. Lebeson's work I find less troubling than the general tone. She opens with a querulous sense of aggrievement: historians have unjustly neglected the Jews—"By some feat the record of the Jews has been expunged." Through the volume, there are occasional hints of mysterious destruction of the materials that would give the Jews their due. Her mission is to redress the balance.

In line with this attitude her style is at once turgid and rhapsodic, with occasional descents to bathos. This manner of writing is not only in questionable taste; it serves also to obscure the meaning of events, indeed, occasionally to impart to events an erroneous meaning. Thus, struck with the frequency of long sequences of rhetorical questions, I discovered these were usually means of making the most outlandish interpretations by indirection. On page 213, the implication of one such series of questions is that the American Reform movement was the instrument by which the Sephardic Jews separated themselves from later immigrants with the intention of assimilating to native Christians. In another place, the suggestion is advanced that the sponsors of Columbus, on his voyage of discovery, had in mind "a sort of Zionist movement"!

More generally, the style conceals a chaotic disorganization of the material. In the early chapters the treatment is roughly chronological, although even there Mrs. Lebeson is capable of speaking of the stagecoach of 1771 and the pony express of 1860 as if they were contemporaneous. But, for the last century, the narrative weaves back and forth incomprehensibly with only the flimsiest binding threads. The following will give but one example. Chapter XVI opens with an attempt to define the contemporary Jew. That effort leads to a series of individual biographies. Among those is an account of Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Within this description there is a discussion of the huge problem of refugee relief. I am afraid this juxtaposition of subjects demonstrates the lack of any reasonable standard for assessing the importance of the material of the past.

Consequently, all sorts of judgments are rendered without reflection and without evidence. Mrs. Lebeson believes that conversion

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away from Judaism occurs only from low motives of fear and greed, and that converts are never fully accepted, never quite at home in America. In her eyes, Judah Touro, Mordecai Noah, Abraham Cahan's *Forward,* Stephen S. Wise, and Judah L. Magnes were alike supporters of Zionism. Basically her conclusions are without validity because she has not even defined what are the proper questions to ask.

In one respect, at least, Mr. Schappes' book is different. Although this author also notes that the Jews have been neglected by the generality of historians, he knows what questions he wishes to ask of his data and has a clear view of what the answers will be. There may be disagreement with the formulation of his questions and the adequacy of his answers, but he has certainly produced a coherent and consistent volume.

Mr. Schappes has brought together 159 documents that illustrate the history of the Jews in the United States between 1654 and 1875. Some of the documents are newly transcribed from manuscripts and newspapers; others have previously been reprinted. But this is the first time so many have been consecutively assembled. The editing is good, the transcription is scrupulously careful, and the selections seem adequately representative. Furthermore, the work is extraordinarily well documented. Fully 170 pages of notes identify the important persons, illuminate many incidental problems, and supply extensive bibliographical citations. To this extent, the *Documentary History* could be a useful reference book.

Some of the bibliographical references will, no doubt, seem strange to scholars unfamiliar with Marxist literature. But there is always room for honest disagreement on what is to be recommended as the best book on a given subject. It is another matter, however, when it comes to the introductory comments by which Mr. Schappes ties the various documents together. These comments furnish the running theme that unifies the whole; and they are written from so biased a point of view that those who turn to this volume may draw from it altogether erroneous impressions.

Mr. Schappes thus interprets American anti-Semitism as the persistent device of a minority ruling class struggling to maintain its power by putting a "premium on competition in a framework of scarcity"; prejudice has therefore a key part in the capitalist pattern of reaction. These sweeping generalizations are attached to documents in which there are occasional expressions of ill feeling toward Jews.

Three qualifications may at once be noted. First, the judgment of the frequency of anti-Semitism is unsound; thus, Schappes speaks of prejudice in the Union army on the basis of a document, the author of which notes he "heard but of a single instance." Secondly, the ethnic slurs cited were directed not only against Jews but also against the Irish and Germans, and even against the Yankees. And, finally, the invidious terms referred to were used not only by conservatives against radicals but also by radicals against conservatives (e.g., documents 35, 48). Once these qualifications are made, there is not much left of the original generalizations.

The same judgment may be rendered of the whole attempt in this volume to interpret American Jewish history in terms of the economic effects of the capitalist system of production. The documents themselves do not support the interpretations in the introductory notes. To Mr. Schappes, Jewish philanthropy was an attempt "to palliate some of the most awful conditions" produced by the inability of capitalism "permanently to supply the needs of the working masses"; the strategy of Zionism was always

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linked to imperialism; and the urbanization of the Jews was a product of capitalism. The identical attitude is manifest in his discussion of American history generally. So, independence was the outcome of a "bourgeois-democratic revolution," and the westward movement came from "the desire to extend the capitalist market into new areas of consumption." I cite these instances, which could readily be multiplied, not with the intention of arguing over each one, but to illustrate the extent to which Marxist (perhaps one should say Communist) terminology and thinking permeate the structure of the volume. Such ideas are, perhaps, more likely to mislead, attached as they are to a useful compilation of documents, than they would be if presented explicitly in a narrative work.

As I set aside these books, I wondered why the task of revealing the past of America's Jews has so largely been left to those who approach it with no more than an easy enthusiasm or with no less than the intention of twisting the story to their own special ends.

Ambiguous Pilgrimage

RED RIBBON ON A WHITE HORSE. By ANZIA YEZIERSKA. With an introduction by W. H. Auden. Scribner's. 220 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT LANGBAUM

ANZIA YEZIERSKA achieved fame during the 20's with a novel called *Hungry Hearts* about Jewish immigrants on New York's Lower East Side. The novel passed almost unnoticed until Samuel Goldwyn bought the screen rights and publicized book and author as build-up for the movie. When the telegram came announcing the sale, Miss Yezierska, herself a Jewish immigrant from Poland, was facing eviction from a miserable room on Hester Street. She had to pawn her only treasure, a shawl her mother had left her, in order to get the nickel to telephone the agent handling the negotiations and the dime for carfare to his office. Whisked overnight to fame and fortune in Hollywood, she was soon disillusioned with what she found there and decided to leave. This book, her spiritual autobiography, concerns that decision and the effect it had upon the rest of her career.

She decided to leave Hollywood, first, because she could not get over a guilty sense of having deserted her people and her class. She was oppressed by the cruel predicament of writers who make money out of social protest. Writing about the slums had enabled her to rise above them, to live among the exploiters. Writing about the Jews had made her somehow a *meshumedes,* an apostate. She had broken from her father and from the tradition of Jewish Orthodoxy in which she had been raised, not certainly for the sake of mere comfortableness, but because that other world, the world of secular culture, had seemed to offer more room for an expansion of the human spirit, for a certain free and disinterested pursuit of intellect and art not possible in the narrowly parochial ghetto. Yet intellect and art were the last things being pursued in Hollywood. Comfort was, in fact, all she was getting. She could not dispel from her mind the image of her pious father shaking an accusing finger from the grave: "Can fire and water be together? Neither can godliness and ease." "Poverty," he had been used to say, "becomes a Jew like a red ribbon on a white horse."

Poverty, in any case, became her—indeed it had been the whole subject of her work. Detached from it, she found she couldn't write. That was the second and main reason she left Hollywood. She had written to resolve an inner conflict caused by her rebellion against her ghetto inheritance—in the hope that "by writing out what I don't know and can't understand, it would stop hurting me." But Hollywood does not recognize the vagaries of the creative impulse—that comfort, for example, even happiness, may be for some writers the very thing to stifle results. When Miss Yezierska told a producer that she never knew from day to day what she could write, "Who do you think you are?" he asked her, "Joan of Arc waiting for the voices?"

She returned to New York but she could not get back to the old setting. The rebellion she had expressed against her ghetto inheritance had been at least the sign of her tie to that inheritance. It had given her the subject for *Hungry Hearts.* Now, however, when she was successful and rebellion was no longer necessary, she found herself without an inheritance and, what was perhaps even more important, without any new subject for her work. She went on writing the same ghetto novel over and over, but with steadily diminishing success. She passed from notice—until today she addresses a public that does not for the most part know who Anzia Yezierska is or what she has done.

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WERE this the whole of Miss Yezierska's story, there would be little to recommend in her autobiography. She is no longer famous. She says nothing illuminating about the art she practices. She does not even offer the kind of memoir of her times, the intimate reminiscences of persons and places, one expects; for she is much too self-absorbed to give more than perfunctory attention to externals.

But she tells also another story—of the immigrant, particularly the Jewish immigrant, who having rejected his old culture finds in America no new culture to take its place. Americanism for him is a pure negation, emancipating him from old restrictions without providing any positive precepts by which to live. Having sacrificed his own manners, customs, and religion, he thinks of America as the place where manners, customs, and religion are necessarily sacrificed to the business of getting ahead. At the same time, he may retain enough of the older values to feel guilty, to feel he has sacrificed the better to the worse.

Miss Yezierska's sense of guilt runs like a *leitmotif* through the book. She is haunted by the memory of her father's disapproval. His admonitions stand, throughout, as the test of truth, while the life she struggled so hard to attain, the life of freedom and personal ambition, is presented as false and unrewarding. Having separated herself first from the ghetto and then from the business of getting ahead—from the only American life she knew—she found she had no connection with any life outside her own, and for that reason no subject for her novels. It was to establish connection with another kind of American life, with what she suspected might be an American tradition, that she settled, after years of poverty and anonymity, in a New Hampshire village. She hoped to strike roots there and write successfully again.

She struck no roots in New Hampshire but New Hampshire did send her back to her proper roots. For she learned there that she had already possessed and abandoned what she was now seeking: that her father, uncompromising old Jew who had scarcely stirred out of the ghetto, was actually closer in spirit than she to the tightly-knit village society, homogeneous and traditional. Her father and the villagers had in common the inner assurance of those who have never questioned the thing that they are or the traditions that formed them, who have never presumed to take upon themselves the burden of unlimited choice. She had presumed to choose—to accept or reject—at every step. And even now she was presuming—presuming this time to choose the tradition she would adhere to. That this was a mistake she learned when a friend quoted Emerson to her: "When a man has got to a certain point of truth in his career, he becomes conscious forevermore that he must take himself for better, or for worse, as his portion: that what he can get out of his plot of ground by the sweat of his brow is his meat; and though the broad universe is full of good, not a particle can he add to himself but through the toil bestowed on this spot."

The story ends with the author on her way from New Hampshire back once again to New York, serene in the determination to be herself, to be it would seem a Jew and her father's daughter.

IT IS this story—"of an early twentieth-century immigrant," as he calls it—that interests W. H. Auden. He tells us in the introduction that "it has a deeper and more general significance today when, figuratively, the immigrant is coming more and more to stand as a symbol for Everyman, for the natural and unconscious community of tradition is rapidly disappearing from the earth." Thus Miss Yezierska contributes a personal analogue of a main question of our time. For if it is true that the unconscious community of tradition is disappearing, it is also true that the conscious talk about tradition, the clamor for it, increases steadily. We are all immigrants in the sense that we have deliberately separated ourselves from the past. But we are also, like Miss Yezierska, coming to feel the need for a new connection with the past, with a way of life permanent enough to withstand the shifting expediencies of the times and the rival claims of theories whose grounds dissolve with every generation.

We would for this reason be interested to know what it is Miss Yezierska returns to. The answer would particularly concern American Jews who would want to know, for example,

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where she will find her roots, whether her conversion has been religious, and how it will change her style of living. But to questions like these she provides no answer. She does not say what she considers to constitute the Jewish tradition nor how much of it she will retain and how much discard. This is unfortunate since traditionalists who have, like Miss Yezierska, denied before reaffirming, are perhaps the only ones to establish the validity of tradition for a generation of "immigrants." We can suppose that she had not at the time of writing worked out the answers for herself, that experience had not yet carried her that far. For it is the prime virtue of this little book that the author passes on nothing at second hand, but only such wisdom as she has herself achieved genuinely and passionately through experience.

Maimonides and We

THE LEGACY OF MAIMONIDES. By BEN ZION BOKSER. Philosophical Library. 128 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by EMIL L. FACKENHEIM

IF THIS book succeeds, in barely 130 pages, in portraying the religious thought of the great Jewish sage of the Middle Ages, it is the result of three virtues: the author's thorough knowledge of the subject, his gift of clear and concise statement, and his determination—in the main—to tell us what Maimonides actually said, instead of telling us what he should have said, or what he would say were he alive today.

The last is perhaps what matters most. Overanxious to find props for current views, popular writers on Jewish tradition readily yield to the temptation of reading the present into the past. The Bible turns out to be a source book of democratic ideals, and Maimonides an almost-modern thinker—a thinker, in fact, who, were he alive today, would be a rationalist or a liberal. That this kind of writing does no service to historical accuracy goes without saying. It is perhaps more important to realize that it does no service to any genuine modern orientation either. What, beyond bolstering our collective Jewish ego, is to be gained from the assurance that Jewish tradition at its highest teaches almost the same ideas to which we already subscribe and to which we probably came independently of tradition? Our tradition can be of real value to us only if we understand its true nature and especially the way in which it differs from our modern outlook. In observing these differences, we may come to reflect upon our modern—unconscious and therefore uncritically accepted—assumptions.

Dr. Bokser's book is a contribution toward such an authentic modern orientation because it clearly shows the differences between Maimonides' medieval and our 20th-century assumptions, and thereby leads one to see some of our problems in a new perspective.

Thus, in a passage aptly quoted by Dr. Bokser, Maimonides writes: "We are mixed up with other nations; we have learnt their opinions, and followed their ways and acts. . . . Having been brought up among persons untrained in philosophy, we are inclined to consider these philosophical opinions as foreign to our religion, just as uneducated persons find them foreign to their own notions. But, in fact, it is not so." This statement has an immediate appeal to any enlightened modern man: what is true is universally true. We must, to quote the Union Prayer Book, "welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time." To protect Judaism, we might shut ourselves off from the truths of reason: but in doing so we, and our Judaism, would land in an obscurantism as repugnant morally as it would be indefensible rationally.

But to avow this only gives rise to a really baffling question: what is to become of Jewish separateness? If whatever is true is universally true, is not Judaism absorbed into a universal religion? It is precisely the fear of this which gives rise to such a form of anti-rationalism as modern religious chauvinism. And it is instructive to see that the problem arises for our modern rationalism, but not for Maimonides' medieval rationalism. What distinguishes the latter from the former is its acceptance of revelation as a historical fact. Reason, while sovereign in its own sphere, is only one of two sources of truth; the other is revelation, embodied in the Torah and given to Israel. Dr. Bokser clearly shows that Maimonides, far from denying the actuality of revelation at Sinai, sets himself the task of making it compatible with the findings of reason. Can it be, the modern reader may ask, that the conflict between the universal demands of reason and the religious grounds of Jewish separateness will be resolved only if we are able, in some way, to return to a doctrine of revelation?

Similarly, much is heard in our time about

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the need to formulate a "Jewish philosophy." Did Maimonides engage in such an undertaking? Dr. Bokser clearly shows that the *Guide to the Perplexed* is not meant to be a philosophical system. Maimonides writes not as a philosopher but as a theologian: accepting on faith the validity of the Torah and the act of revelation on which this validity rests, he seeks to determine the philosophical conditions which make it compatible with the account of reality given by philosophers and scientists. Here, too, we find food for thought: can there be, in principle, any such thing as a "Jewish philosophy"? Or does that not seem an inherent impossibility, and the very phrase, indeed, a contradiction in terms? And if we decide that it is a Jewish *theology* we are after, how—if we do not accept, as did Maimonides, revelation—are we to prevent it from dissolving into philosophy plain, simple, and non-denominational?

Dr. Bokser's book could not give rise to questions such as these if it did not state clearly and faithfully the differences between the Maimonidean and the modern outlook. Dr. Bokser's terminology, however, is open to criticism. He uses, without sufficient clarification, modern language to characterize medieval thought. "Determinism" and "naturalism" do not mean the same thing in modern and medieval philosophy; the Aristotelian God, whatever his religious shortcomings, is certainly not "a kind of blind force" (the quarrel between Maimonides and the Aristotelians is not analogous to that between modern rationalist theology and materialism); and no medieval philosopher would have described his philosophy as "man-made." Fortunately, the confusion is, on the whole, only one of terminology. A footnote on naturalism and supernaturalism reveals a full grasp of the meaning of medieval "naturalism," despite the ambiguous use of the term elsewhere.

In the last chapter, Dr. Bokser turns from a description of Maimonides' thought to an explicit evaluation of its relevance for the modern mind; and here he finally yields to the temptation which he so creditably resisted throughout the rest of his book: the "modernizing" of Maimonides.

We are told that we must reject the "false bravado" of a Bertrand Russell who, unable to offer the comforts of a friendly universe, summons us to live nobly, if tragically, in a dark and alien world. "Faith for living must be built on sterner stuff," says Dr. Bokser. Men are sorely in need of peace of mind—witness the prevalence of neuroticism and suicides. Moreover, a faith is "needed" to provide strong moral motivations, for "one needs compelling incentives still to cling to the good in spite of the consequences." In other words, Dr. Bokser looks for a faith which is comforting, and he rejects the views of Bertrand Russell not because they are false but because they fail to give that comfort.

One ventures to suggest that Maimonides would have more sympathy with Bertrand Russell's dedication to an uncomfortable truth than with what appears to be Dr. Bokser's maxim: comfort at any cost. Maimonides did indeed teach a truth which was comforting, but he taught it because he believed it to be the truth; and this devotion to truth, at least, he shares with Bertrand Russell. Dr. Bokser tries to claim Maimonides for religious pragmatism: his concern was to give men "the resources of doctrine and life which they needed for their careers on earth." But the passage quoted in support of this interpretation says something quite different: Maimonides defends the Torah not because men "need" it; it would be more correct to say that, in his opinion, men need it because it is the Torah, i.e., the revealed truth.

It would have been preferable to pass over in silence the one bad chapter in an otherwise good book, were it not for the fact that it, too, teaches a lesson. The substance of Dr. Bokser's book gives us historical information which may aid our own religious self-examination; the shortcomings of its last chapter illustrate how sorely such a self-examination is needed.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Max Beloff is reader in the comparative study of institutions at Oxford University.

Oscar Handlin is associate professor of history at Harvard.

Golo Mann is now associate professor of history at Claremont Men's College in California.

Robert Langbaum is an instructor of literature at Cornell University.

Emil L. Fackenheim is lecturer in philosophy at the University of Toronto.

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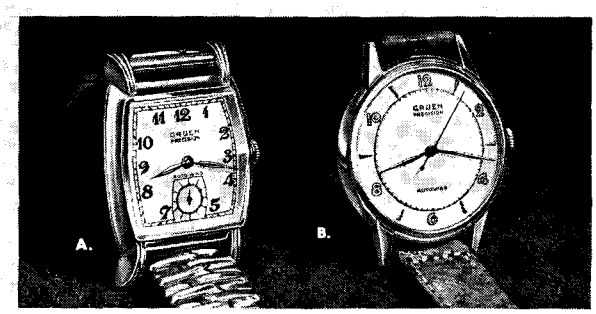

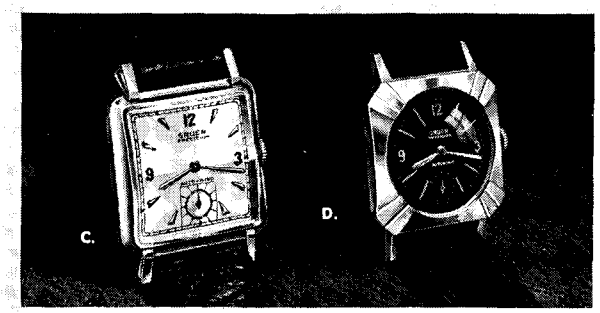

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